

FERGIE BEY



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CAPTAIN V. H. FERGUSSON, O.B.E., F.R.G.S.

Born, July 25th, 1891. Murdered by Nuers, December 14th, 1927

THE STORY OF FERGIE BEY

(AWARAQUAY)

TOLD BY
HIMSELF AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS

*Not in the camp his victory lies
Or triumph in the market-place,
Who is his Nation's sacrifice
To turn the judgment from his race.*

RUDYARD KIPLING (*The Reformers*)

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Preface

IN December 1927, papers in England were filled with the news that Captain Fergusson, District Commissioner of Bahr-el-Ghazal, had been murdered by Nuers.

Among his friends in the Sudan he had been nicknamed 'The King of the Nuers.' He had made these savage people his own special care. For years he had studied them, trained them, doctored them—seemed almost to have come within measurable distance of civilising them; and then, suddenly, through the vengeful malice of one man, to whom he had shown favour and kindness far beyond his deserts, the tribe was deprived of the best friend it had ever had.

Early in the following year, articles appeared in magazines about Capt. Fergusson's great and valuable work, and sketches were given of his personality. But papers are of the day, magazines of the month. It was felt by those who knew him best that something more was called for. The true story of an unusually adventurous life was a thing not to be wasted while there lived boys, young and old, who

might joy to read it, seeing that he himself was a boy to the end of his thirty-six years.

He left many letters telling of the work and the fun he had found in life; and he left many friends who were ready to add to these their knowledge of the career and character of one who would never have wished to be called a hero. The result follows. Those who read it may form their own opinions as to what he should be called.

February 1930.

Foreword

*Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare whilst others fly,
They build a nation's pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.*

WHEN my friends, Colonel and Mrs. Fergusson, decided to publish extracts from their late son's very full and interesting letter-diary and invited me to write a Foreword, I willingly consented—not only from a ready desire to comply with their wishes, but from a feeling that it was my bounden duty—in so far as I was able—to pay yet another tribute to those splendid officers, officials and others who were helping well and truly to lay the foundations of sound and equitable government in a country which for generations had been a prey to every form of venality and maladministration which it was possible to conceive.

Only a few years ago I had written a short memoir for the late Major Stigand's *Equatoria*, published shortly after the latter's death at the hands of the savage Aliab Dinka tribesmen of the Southern Sudan, and I readily avail myself of this further opportunity of offering my humble tribute to the memory of yet another most gallant and efficient member of the Sudan Services—Vere Henry Fergusson, O.B.E.—District Commissioner, who was

killed on the shores of Lake Jorr by some malcontents of the great Nuer Tribe over whom he had ruled with such marvellous sympathy and such conspicuous success—as the following pages will show.

‘Fergie Bey’, as he was more familiarly known amongst his friends and comrades in the Sudan, was born in Ireland on the 25th July, 1891—the only son of Colonel W. S. Fergusson, C.M.G. (late King’s Dragoon Guards) His Majesty’s Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, and of Mrs. Fergusson. He was educated at Wellington College and after serving in the ranks of both the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry and the 8th Hussars, he obtained his Commission in the 1st Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) in March 1913. Writing in February 1911 to his mother, his company commander says, ‘He has made his way in the Battalion in a manner that I have never known in the case of a young soldier. No difference has ever been made either by myself or by any other officer in his case; he has had no favour and he owes his popularity to himself only. I only hope that you will not consider the year that your son has spent in the Army to have been wasted. He does not regret it I am glad to say. I hope it has done him good rather than the contrary. At any rate he has done nothing but good to his former comrades by teaching them that a gentleman can be every inch a gentleman as well in the ranks as when holding a Commission.’

This estimate of his character is borne out very clearly throughout his subsequent career.

From May 1914 to April 1916 he served with the West African Regiment and during that time saw seven months' active service in the Cameroons. To quote from *Sudan Notes and Records*, to the editor of which he sent from time to time very interesting articles on Nuer folklore and tales, 'In these early days he was already noted for the great interest he took in the native and for his talent for organisation, characteristics which he was to develop later and which were to enable him to do so much for the natives of the Southern Sudan. All those who ever served with him will thoroughly endorse the estimate of Fergusson's character as portrayed in a farewell speech by the French Commandant after combined operations: "If we wanted more supplies Fergusson was the one to bring them to us; if reinforcements, Fergusson; if orders or news, Fergusson; if a good friend to amuse us, Fergusson."

'In June 1916, Fergusson arrived in Egypt on being seconded for service with the Egyptian Army. He was posted to the Equatorial Battalion and given command of the Company at Tambura in the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province. During 1918 he was for three months A.D.C. to his father in Palestine and on returning to the Sudan he was immediately sent on Active Service with a column operating against the Turkhana. During these years Fergusson had been attracted by the idea of employment by the Sudan Government as a District Commissioner and he finally transferred to the Civil Administration in July 1919. He was posted to Rumbek and commenced his eight years' continuous service in the

Eastern Bahr-el-Ghazal. It was during the last six years of this period that his life was devoted to bringing the Nuers of the Province under control. In this task, in the face of great personal hardship, personal danger, and many setbacks, he succeeded to such a degree that the District Commissioner of a neighbouring Nuer district described his success as a miracle. During the Aliab Patrol 1919-20 he acted as an Intelligence Officer and was appointed an Officer of the British Empire Order in recognition of his valuable services. It was almost entirely due to the information he obtained, owing to his knowledge of the natives, that the enemy was finally forced to surrender.

‘... He identified himself so much with the great Nuer tribe that he will always be remembered especially in that connection.

‘As an Administrator of wild tribes Fergusson showed great talent, and his ability to gain their confidence and bend them to his will was most exceptional. The fact that on hearing of his death all other Sections of the Tribe remained loyal and offered assistance when one section rebelled is a crowning testimony to the soundness of his work—undoubtedly too, Fergusson, by his personal fearlessness, kindness and ability to understand their point of view and consequent fairness in his decisions, won the general affection, as well as the respect of the Chiefs and people.

‘Last, but not least, mention must be made of Fergusson’s wonderful medical work. His steamer the *Kerreri* was indeed a floating hospital and the

medical officers serving in his area bore enthusiastic testimony to the value of his work. In Fergusson there passed away an exceptionally fine administrator, a true friend of the native, and one beloved and admired by all who served with him.'

In addition to the O.B.E. and the Sudan Medal and clasp, he received for the Great War, a mention in Despatches, the 1914-15 star and two medals.

Apropos of 'Fergie Bey's' medical work his father wrote me 'there is no doubt that Vere's success in managing the Nuers was largely owing to his extraordinary aptitude for medical and surgical work inherited from both his grandfathers, one of whom was a distinguished Surgeon and the other, though a layman, had extensive medical knowledge.' The 'letter-diary' must be read in order that the magnitude and value of this work may be appreciated, but what could be more striking than the following extracts? 'After breakfast the rush began . . . 106 patients, 65 of whom had injections of one sort or another. . . . I'm seriously thinking they will have to give me a doctor of my own soon . . . my total sick returns showed 765 patients . . . not so bad for one month, especially as they all came in 15 days. . . . I got back to the River to find Dr. Crouch waiting for me with the *Lady Baker*. He was just bursting with joy at all the sick . . . and said I must not only have a base Hospital of my own, but also a British doctor and a Hospital Ship. The Director wrote back and said he quite agreed and wanted concrete proposals put up, so at last my work is bearing fruit, thank goodness!'

One could multiply such extracts a hundredfold. Then his hunting adventures with elephants and lions are positively thrilling, showing that not only was he a very fine sportsman but entirely without fear. One can well understand that amongst wild tribesmen who have to gain their livelihood by hunting, fishing and raiding their neighbours, such exploits, coupled with his marvellous kindness and success in the healing of the sick, his love of children and animals and their love of him, and the thousand and one charming traits in his character which come out in the perusal of these most interesting pages—all contributed to make 'Fergie Bey' trusted by those with whom he had to deal—British or European—white or black—they respected and loved 'Awaraquay,' the name by which he was known amongst the natives he ruled, and which had come to him through the gift of a big white bull with a black face; an animal known by the Agar Dinkas (who treated it as a sort of charm) by this strange name. By other tribes he was dubbed 'Marialdite' (the 'big' bull); but it is as 'Awaraquay' that his spirit and his example will live in the great area which he administered with such conspicuous success.

So infectious was his optimism that one of his Nuer subjects, till recently a 'wild savage, but tamed by 'Fergie Bey', when speaking of a neighbouring but somewhat recalcitrant tribe, remarked, 'Why don't they send their chiefs over to us to be taught how to administer, give them to us for a week, and we'd make them see sense.'

The above brief account of 'Fergie Bey's' short

but very full life and the few quotations I have given will of course be found in full detail in the 'Story,' but I have ventured to epitomise them in this foreword for a set purpose, for I am in entire agreement with a remark made in a letter addressed to Vere's mother by one of her friends who had been privileged to read his letter-diary. 'I hope and trust,' he writes, 'the story of "Fergie Bey" will be given to all our schools, both public and Secondary.'

It has become, therefore, my set purpose to call special attention to this wonderful record of a peculiarly useful life, by endeavouring to take it out of the realm of a mere letter-diary (most valuable as is this aspect of it) and make it a living force—to be studied, examined, and indeed if possible to become an inspiration to old and young alike.

To those who are in the full flow of life, the 'Story' cannot fail to appeal; for the great area of the Sudan, in which 'Fergie Bey' lived and moved and had his being, is still—politically speaking—in the melting pot. Throughout these pages are strewn remarks pregnant with wise import for those who desire to understand the situation in that country and the difficulties which must be surmounted by those charged with its administration or who are responsible for directing its destinies; whilst to the younger generation—to those who are still being educated or who have just begun their careers—whatever may be the walk of life they have selected—the 'Story of Fergie Bey' cannot also fail to be an inspiration: his early training, his life in the ranks, the development and strength of his character,

his will to win, his splendid optimism in face of unheard of difficulties and opposition, his religious convictions—all these characteristics and qualifications will serve as a great example to be followed; yet to one like myself who has had experience of men of all ‘sorts and conditions’ passing through my hands during the seventeen years I held the post of Sirdar and Governor-General of the Sudan and later on of High Commissioner for Egypt, I can say without hesitation that—outstanding example as ‘Fergie Bey’ is of the very best type of British Officer and gentleman—the great majority of officers, officials and others who assisted me in my task, were imbued with that self-same spirit of loyal devotion to duty, of uncomplaining cheerfulness in almost intolerable conditions of loneliness and hardship, under trying climatic conditions, and of interminable struggles with wild and savage tribesmen restive under any sort of control. It is to such men, working—so to speak—in the outposts of Empire that I desire to pay this tribute of true appreciation and to endeavour to bring home to our legislators and to those in authority that, in the exercise of their functions, it is of vital importance to attach due weight to the views and opinions of ‘the men on the spot.’ Throughout these pages, there are passages which show that occasionally ‘Fergie Bey’ was somewhat restive of control and perhaps at times intolerant of criticism whether in the immediate Headquarters of his District or of the seat of Government in Khartoum; but who can say that his attitude was not justified? How many good men and true—

tried by long years of experience in the government of semi-educated natives or of the savage tribes of Africa or Asia—have not had their views and advice turned down by armchair critics or by those in authority who, perhaps, for political causes or other reasons, have had it in their power to condemn ‘the man on the spot’ as a senseless despot or a wrong-headed enthusiast? Yet time has shown that had their advice been taken endless trouble might have been avoided and success in place of failure achieved. Still every little helps and if the ‘Story of Fergie Bey’ be studied, as I hope it may be, a glorious optimism must result—a feeling of ‘thank God for the lives of such men.’ The great spirit of courage and adventure which has made our Empire is not dead—it is perhaps more alive than ever before—and when the ‘Story of Fergie Bey’ is read, we can rise up with the feeling that with such men amongst the younger generation the destinies of our Country are safe, even though some of the actors either ‘fall by the way’ or ‘are thrown to the wolves’—still their spirits live and their work stands as a monument for all to behold. As Benson and Tatham in their study of General Gordon’s character so truly remark, ‘When a man has worked and striven and done his duty, the good that he has done lives after him and he lives too, not only in another world, but also in this world of ours. His example is left for others; through belief in him, they may believe in the future of mankind. The spirits of the departed are ever with us in our way through the desert of life.’

Before I read the 'Story' I wrote to one of my former Officers, Major Wheatley, of whose views I have always held a high opinion, and who for seven years had been Governor of the 'Bog' (as the Bahr el Ghazal Province has been familiarly dubbed from the early days of our Administration). I knew Fergusson had served directly under him and I asked him to tell me frankly what he thought of him. I cannot do better than give his reply *in extenso*.

'In reviewing the life of Vere Henry Fergusson there appears to be one particularly arresting trait in his character—his will to win. From his childhood upwards as one reads his story one is struck by his unfailing determination to succeed, whether in his own personal career or in accomplishing some task or duty. From those who worked in the closest contact with him I have learned that this characteristic of his was an inspiration and often encouraged them to persevere in what appeared to be an almost hopeless endeavour.

'I cannot help feeling that all those boys and younger men who read this story of his life will share that inspiration so that in the words of one who knew him and his work intimately, "the work will go on and the spirit of Fergie will be ever present guiding and helping."

'He was undoubtedly a born administrator and showed a marvellous talent in dealing with the wild tribesmen, who feared and respected him—not fear born of harsh behaviour but born of a realization of a strong personality and of a deep sympathy with their childlike and untutored minds.

‘His services to the Sudan were indeed of a high value and it is a matter of surprise and admiration that he should, in such a comparatively few number of years and at such an early age, have left so marked an impress on his country.

‘It is with such material as exemplified by Fergusson that the British Empire has been created and as long as England can produce such offspring—brave, determined, unselfish, self-confident—the Empire will endure.

‘To parents—to boys and young men—wrestling with the question of a career—I commend the reading of this life of one who gave his unswerving loyalty to his God, his King and his Country.’

I would urge a wide publicity for this inspiring ‘Story’—not only as a valuable educator of our younger generation, but as a reply to some such questions as the following :—‘Why are we in the Sudan? Why do we interfere with those savage tribes who have their own methods of rule and who have fought with one another and will continue to quarrel with their neighbours till Doomsday?’

In replying to such questions or to those politically-minded critics who view our Oriental and other overseas possessions and protectorates with undisguised dislike, I would say :—‘Does not the civilizing and humanitarian work of a young, unaided British officer in those dark places of the earth appeal to you and—apart from the vitally important political and geographical aspects of our connection with the Sudan—can you not appreciate the self-evident fact that the great struggle carried on by

‘Fergie Bey’ and his co-workers must tend to civilize and uplift those wild and unsophisticated races which Providence, in its inscrutable wisdom, has confided to our care?’

I venture to predict that those who read the ‘Story’ will realise that the true value and significance of the narrative lies not so much in the fact that it is an entertaining book of travel and tale of adventure in a remote and wild corner of the world, but that it is a vivid, vital exposition of the men and methods by which Britain holds her far-flung outposts and binds them all within her orbit of justice and fair dealing at the hands of a comparatively small number of British Officers and officials, and, as in the case of ‘Fergie Bey,’ Stigand and others who sleep where they fell,

“There’s some corner of a foreign field,
That is forever England.”

R. W.

DUNBAR, 28th August, 1930.

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In the Beginning

*... The field is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,
And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost,
And I look through my tears on a soundless-clapping host
As the run-stealers flicker to and fro.*

FRANCIS THOMPSON

SUCH a little bit of a fellow he was, going to his prep. school at nine years old and breaking his heart with homesickness, but doing his best to keep it to himself, although he could never foresee the inconvenient times and places chosen by waves of loneliness to sweep over him. Only when dreams came he was not responsible if tears woke him; and it happened. It could not help happening.

But then there were other dreams—dreams that brought no tears, and so lasted without interruption—dreams of going to Ireland for the holidays, and looking from the steamer to see the dearest face in the world waiting to be kissed; and these, he knew, would come true, so there was always something good to look forward to.

The worst of it was that letters were so hard to write, and that they left, when finished, so much to the imagination of the person who was to read them. Still, there was no difficulty in making crosses, and he knew there could be no doubt as to what they meant. So he made crosses, and he wrote and he

wrote. Whatever the handicap, he was always a good correspondent.

There was no lack of interest in home life, supplied by an outstanding father, who, having himself achieved, expected achievement on the part of a small only son; a mother who, then and always, understood everything; an elder sister (very little older indeed, but when you have only nine years of your own, not much time is required to entitle the elder to a certain amount of consideration); a baby sister, nearly eight years younger than himself—his adored 'little Queen'; an unusually large supply of uncles and aunts, and a dearly beloved grandmother, in whose home many delightful holidays were spent.

He had probably forgotten the very early attempt made by a visiting governess to teach him his alphabet, and his flat rebellion when, refusing to sit at the schoolroom table, he sat under it instead, explaining, with perfect good humour but equal determination, that he objected to learning from a woman; and now, having only masters to deal with, it did not occur to him to wonder why learning from a man was so very little less objectionable.

He had forgotten too the still earlier occasion on which he had defended (with a croquet mallet) his sister Violet against being viciously pinched by a boy who was older than either of them. If he could have remembered how much harder was the mallet than the head of that pincher, it might have consoled him for various hard knocks from hockey-sticks. Some children seem to be open to accidents as others are to illnesses, and he had more than his fair



share of both through life. Hockey-sticks only made a beginning.

The school was in Aldershot; and when his father's regiment, the King's Dragoon Guards, was stationed there, homesickness ended, as it was then possible for him to go to Winton House as a day-boy; but by that time he had found his feet, chosen his friends, and begun to make a name for himself in the playing-field. Games were fine things; and he was equally good at football, cricket and hockey. Skill in these and unfailing good humour secured and held his popularity with the boys and the under-masters; but the Head wanted more than that, and Vere had no friendly feeling for books. His memory was weak, even as the wrists and ankles of his inferiors in the playing-field were weak, and the Head nicknamed him with the sour pun of *Wir Vergessen*. There was an occasion—amusing when far enough away from the smart of it—on which he was caned for getting a sum right. The rightness was so unexpected that the Head accused him—quite falsely—of having copied the answer, and challenged him to repeat the performance. Naturally he was flustered, and the result was disaster. After that, the pedagogic knife was in, and a twist was always an easy matter.

Oddly enough, his great friend was a boy two years younger than himself, no good at athletics, but swimming in the sea of printed pages as in his natural element. To all appearance these two had nothing in common but a liking for pencils and bug-hunting. One or other of them was sure to get the

drawing prize, and their interest in killing-bottles was perennial. When Vere went on to Wellington at thirteen, the younger boy gained a scholarship, which drew forth a characteristic letter of congratulation—‘I nearly cried to think I wasn’t with you all when the news came’—and in the same letter was a burst of almost lyrical delight in the gloriousness of rugger. The mild joys of soccer had hardly prepared him for this king of games; and again he found himself hailed as a valuable addition to the world of young sportsmen. He made excellent use of his sturdy body and was always ready for legitimate adventure. He was nearly drowned in the swimming-bath, but persisted to efficiency; joined the Cadet Corps; had a glorious time at the Public Schools’ Camp; continued to distinguish himself in games; and, going down to Aldershot for the Sports Day at Winton House, won the Old Boys’ Race with great glory.

He had no personal desire for the Navy, but, before going to Wellington, he was sent up from his prep. school to have a shot at it. Having been interviewed by the Board of Admirals, he was told to write an essay on Joseph, and faced the task smilingly. Now, Admirals are not to be excused for inexactitude, and they really ought to have specified their Joseph; but they did not; and how was an unsuspecting candidate to know that their minds were dwelling on the Hebrew gentleman who so narrowly escaped being made a co-respondent by Potiphar? Vere, although he had taken a Scripture prize at school, was not thinking of Scripture History just

then, and he had probably heard Mr. Chamberlain discussed at breakfast-and-newspaper-time at home. This statesman was for him the only Joseph worth considering, and his essay wrote itself in the most natural manner: 'Joseph is a great man for giving speeches, and he is very popular among the nation, especially the people of London, and they know him by his eye-glass' . . . which suggested, to a local specialist in howlers, a song with the wailing refrain of,

'You may know him, always know him
By the eye-glass in his eye.'

There was laughter in those days, and an optimistic outlook on life.

When the results came out later, Vere himself had no regrets about having failed for the Navy. He didn't want it. But he did want the Army; and that was why he went to Wellington, the Public School from which most boys went up to Sandhurst.

He worked conscientiously, but his heart was with the bats and balls rather than with the books, and the work, all against the grain, was getting on his nerves. 'I am doing my best, but it's beating me,' he wrote to the one who always understood. It was nobody's fault. Wellington was very sorry, for tip-top sportsmen like Vere were not to be picked off blackberry-bushes. As his house-master said, many boys were popular with the other boys, and many were popular with the masters, but those equally popular with both were rare; and Vere was universally liked. He had the good word of everyone in the College; and when Old Boys met him

afterwards in the larger world, he was always greeted with joy.

He went next to a school in Lausanne to study French, and while there distinguished himself as an oarsman, being in the Yoles-de-mer winning crew of boys under sixteen. Some fun could always be extracted out of things; but we don't, as a nation, love foreigners. The Lutherans annoyed him, a devout Anglican, by their lack of form and apparent lack of reverence. There seemed to be something wrong about people who never knelt down, and he continued to do what he had been accustomed to do without reference to what was done by those about him; but his perfect good humour was so disarming that no one ever resented anything he did, and he never got into hot water in the manner of those who cannot keep their temper.

There was once a schoolboy—the story comes from unimpeachable authority—who knelt down at night to say his prayers. At the school where this happened, other boys occasionally (very occasionally) did the same thing; and there was no narrow-minded prejudice against the habit, no faintest inclination to ill-bred and foolish jeering; but the rest of the boys in the dormitory took no interest in prayers not their own—simply did not recognise that they were being said. Being in the middle of a rag, they continued to rag, scarcely conscious that the devout exception took as little interest in their activities of the body as they in his of the soul. Concentration was impossible, and the devout one had a quick temper. An unintentional



movement on the part of one of the raggers knocked him sprawling, and devotions ceased. The boy, having so far done his best, now sprang to his feet, furious, demanding, 'What the ruddy hell do you mean by disturbing a fellow at his prayers?' Nothing happened, beyond huge delight for those who had a sense of humour and could enter into the joy of sharp contrasts. But just suppose that dormitory had been a barrack-room, or even the dormitory of a foreign school! . . . Vere scored in that he could always keep his temper. If people were amused at, or contemptuous of what he did, it made no difference to him. He just went on doing it until he had finished, and then talked about something else without either resentment or reproachfulness. The method had the double advantage of being both simple and infallible.

Vere spent a year in Switzerland, and then went to an Army crammer to prepare for the Sandhurst Entrance. On this his future seemed to hang, and he never shirked his work ; but he shied at an examination paper as a nervous young horse shies at a frightening object on the roadside. Possibly none among all his trainers had ever walked him up to it in exactly the right way and shown him the harmlessness of the thing.

There are some very useful people in the world whose brains won't work on examination lines, and Vere had in him the blood of that sporting uncle whose modest boast it was that he had never passed anything but a winning-post. His chances for the R.M.C. were not rosy; but he lived, while waiting, on the thought that you never knew your luck.

In the Ranks

*He shall forswear and put away
The idols of his sheltered house;
And to necessity shall pay
Unflinching tribute of his vows.*

RUDYARD KIPLING

VERE was in Ireland when he heard that he had failed for Sandhurst; and for a long time after the notification had reached him he could not be found. He had, metaphorically speaking, turned his face to the wall, and wanted neither to eat nor drink. His world seemed to have collapsed, and left him, by some inexplicable chance, alive and whole to face the ruin of it. After hours and hours, he was found in the stables where he had gone, away from human beings with the gift of speech, to find comfort in the animals who could be depended on not to talk.

All through his life he turned instinctively to the friendship of horses, dogs and birds; and the horses were there now, in his hour of need, with their blessed silent understanding. He could not 'come round' all at once; but, sooner than might have been expected, he began to make plans for the next best thing. One door had been shut in his face; but there was another—a shabby-looking portal, with a grubby threshold crossed by heavy, dirty boots, and showing glimpses of a rough, hard floor beyond

it. Having made up his mind by any means to enter, it was through that door he must pass, and the sooner the better. Nothing was to be gained by delay.

His father was away at the time, but he told his mother what he wanted to do, sure of her understanding and commonsense. He had confidence that he would not meet in her the opposition of foolish hesitations and false pride. She knew as well as he did what hardships he was letting himself in for, and she hated the prospect for him; but, with the finest courage, she was ready to strengthen his hands for the holding of his own fate.

On November the 13th, 1909, he enlisted at Gravesend in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and took the first step on the rough road he was to travel for years. He liked physical comfort as well as another, but it never occurred to him to treat the absence of it as a tragedy. What he set out to do, counting the cost, he did, simply and smilingly, in singleness of heart and integrity of purpose.

Almost immediately after joining, he was spotted by an old Wellington boy who had got his commission in the D.C.L.I.; without loss of time the mess was informed that Colonel Fergusson's son was in the ranks, and it might have been a matter of twenty-four hours before every Tommy in the regiment knew about it. From the very first they were all as nice to him as they knew how to be, but he never for a moment presumed on his invisible status as a gentleman ranker, nor expected anyone to 'clean his boots and sometimes call him "sir".'

As a matter of fact they called him 'Arry. 'Vere' may have held a faintly comprehended suggestion of Lady Clara—was at least too highfalutin for common use; and the second gift of his godparents offered a homely compromise. Pug was the only one who used the more distinguished name when writing to him, and Pug was a fairly bad hat as hats go.

Vere's particular friends made a point of writing to him when he was on furlough or they were, or if their service ended while he was with the regiment; and the consensus of opinion seems to settle the fact that Pug was always more or less on the booze. What would you?

'We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,

But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints.'

But they were good fellows. There was Bob, who sent him marmalade, and apologized for the liberty, 'as our positions somewhat differ.' There was Old Cow, who declared his readiness to soldier for twenty-one years if only Vere might be his company officer; Jack, who was evidently as keen a dog-fancier as Private Ortheris; Charlie, whose wife commandeered the wrist-watch given to him by Vere on leaving; and Ginger, who wished him 'a *prosperious* New Year.'

Bob had an unbounded admiration for him: 'You know I always respected you to the extreme . . . One would not find such a good fellow as you

are in a day's march'—agreeing with Monty, who declared him 'the best fellow we ever had.' Many of the letters were full of thanks for chickens sent from Ireland, and gave details of how these were shared and how far they were made to stretch as relish for an otherwise bleak tea. Pug, apparently pleased to have a worse case than his own to report, wrote him a thrillingly realistic account of a sergeant—no less!—'mad drunk and resisting the guard'; in the same letter gave him good advice—'Don't take any notice of the Fairies, and you will be all right'—and remained 'Yours to a cinder.'

Fairies meant—at least in that regiment—women of any kind, good, bad and indifferent. The term took Vere's fancy. He introduced it into the next regiment with which he was concerned, and continued to use it all his life. It certainly was more euphonious than 'hags,' the corresponding term among school-boys. The warning was superfluous, for Vere was ever a strict anchorite, and took small interest in fairies of any class, even in ways of perfectly respectable dalliance.

One man, who dropped out into private life shortly after Vere joined, wrote inviting him to spend Christmas with him and his wife—picturesquely alluded to as 'the Queen of the Fairies'—who had herself suggested the invitation. Some of his room-mates offered to forgo their furlough rather than desert him at Christmas, probably realizing more fully than he what a thin time he was likely to have. His own letters, written when the festival was over, were illuminating.

‘I shall never forget my first Christmas Day in the Army . . . I got up at 6 a.m., went to Holy Communion, and found myself the only soldier there. On my way out of church, I was greeted most cordially by a civilian whom I had never seen before. He wished me a happy Christmas, etc., and started walking home with me. He proved to be the regimental preacher, who had been with the regiment for only about a month. He knew the padre at Hounslow, and seemed quite surprised to find that I knew him too. He asked me of course to attend lectures, etc., and go to his house for tea whenever I liked. . . . I got to barracks about 8 a.m., and then had to go on cookhouse fatigue till 10 a.m., when I started off for church again with the troops. . . . Lunch was a good feed, and very different from what we have been used to. The officers and their wives came in and wished us good luck, and by 2 p.m., when we had finished, the majority of the men were drunk. I retired to my room in hopes of having a little peace, but was much disappointed to find two drunken cooks already there. They immediately began to argue, and then to fight, one man being laid out. The victor then, being pleased with his work, wanted to fight everyone in the room, starting with me. I managed to ward off his blows, in spite of the fact that I was sitting down when he attacked me, and I soon managed to knock him over. . . . The rest of the day passed without any particular excitement. Everyone was drunk, even the guard, and it was impossible to get any rest at all. Many of the men are still feeling the

effects, and I shall be glad when Christmas week is over.'

His private Christmas was made up of home letters and presents, and the agreeable recollection of a letter from his father, expressing most generous approval of the step he had taken and offering him an allowance, which he had the great good sense to refuse. He wanted no difference made between himself and his brother Tommies—fine wisdom for a boy of eighteen. His sister, then married and living in India, sent him a fiver; but that was another matter. There was a line to be drawn between a present and an allowance. Hampers came from various members of the family, and these shed a sweet influence on tea-time for him and his friends long after acknowledged festivities were over.

It was in May of the following year that Tankey entered into his life—a bull-terrier pup of six months, given to him by one of his new friends. Tankey's father and mother were both pedigree animals, and his first owner had refused two pounds for the pup, because he feared there was a chance of a bad home lying behind the offer. That man would have been made happy by prevision of the pleasant places in which Tankey's lines were to fall. Vere sent him to Ireland, knowing how much better a time the dog would have than if kept in barracks; and from then until the end of his fifteen years the dog was one of Mrs. Fergusson's most treasured possessions. In every letter from India, Vere sent his love to Tankey, just as to any other member of

the family; and no home letter was complete without a bulletin of Tankey's health.

Vere remained in the D.C.L.I. for a year and three months; and there were humorous adventures, such as lunching at the side of the road with a certain general's groom, and being tipped two shillings when marking for Territorials on the ranges; but there were undercurrents of dissatisfaction among relations, and his grandfather insisted on buying him out in February 1911. Vague talk followed of good appointments to be had for the asking in Canada, and study began again; but all the time Vere knew what he wanted, and Canada had nothing whatsoever to do with it. He had measured his strength at Gravesend, was a crack shot, efficient in drill, and a star in the gym. When he left, the Colonel had praised him in no measured terms. Besides, there were humours in the life, and possibly these were enhanced by distance from their framework. The long and short of it was an absolute certainty that he could never be satisfied until he had secured his commission; and it was too (with qualifications) bad that his progress towards the desired end had been checked when he was getting on so well. Never mind the grandfather. If the father, who was more important, had been reasonable before, he would be reasonable again. Nothing could be lost by tackling him; and nothing was.

Re-Enlistment

*Back to the Army again, sergeant,
Back to the Army again. . . .
A man that's too good to be lost you.*

RUDYARD KIPLING

THIS time it was to be a cavalry regiment, and he was to serve in India. The regiment chosen, the 8th Hussars, being then abroad, he had to join the 4th Hussars at Colchester until it was time for him to embark, when he was given a provisional Lance-Corporal stripe for the voyage.

A man who had been a great friend of his at his Army crammer's, and had joined the 8th Hussars from Sandhurst, was horrified when he heard that Fergie was coming to it, calling on heaven to witness how great would be his dilemma if his friend should be brought up before him in Orderly Room. Vere assured him of his fixed intention never to be brought up in Orderly Room, and he never was.

His experiences on board the troopship were of a kind to strengthen his belief in the goodness of human nature. Nothing that could be done for him was left undone. The purser on board the *Plassy* had travelled with Colonel and Mrs. Fergusson on their last return from India, and a word to him bore generous fruit. He at once took possession of Vere on the excuse of wanting a clerk, which meant

once his memory rose to the occasion; and he had no need to accept help either liquid or solid from anyone. He did well and was happy.

There is an old allegory, to which one may refer, if it be not quite outworn:—A traveller came to a village, and asked the local sage what kind of people the inhabitants were. The sage counter-questioned, 'What kind of people were in the place from which you came?'

'Odious,' answered the traveller; 'disagreeable, unfriendly, dishonest, grudging, inconsiderate, unkind. Horrid people!'

'You will find exactly the same sort here,' said the wise man; and the traveller went away.

After a while came another, asking the same question, and of him too the sage inquired, 'What were they like in the place from which you came?'

'Oh, a tip-top lot!' answered the second traveller—or words to that effect. 'Awfully good fellows; pleasant, friendly, straightforward, kind, considerate and always ready to help the under dog. You ought to have known them.'

'You will find the same here,' said the wise man; and it was so.

Vere never speculated about how people were going to treat him, or wondered if they were going to like him; he didn't much care; but he was himself agreeable and friendly to everyone, and was rarely met in a different spirit. Before he went to India, some pessimist had tried to set him against cavalry soldiers. In his first letter from Lucknow he wrote:—'You know what sort of men they were

said to be out here. Well, I'm glad to say that what I was told was absolutely wrong. They all seem very nice and hospitable, and are willing to do anything for me. The Sergeant Major of A Squadron is an exceedingly nice man. I had a long talk with him yesterday. He said, of course, he knew who I was' (as did every man in the regiment by that time), 'and he was ready to do anything in his power to help me. . . . When we had finished talking, I said that I should like to give him a drink—meaning a tip; but he absolutely refused, saying it would be time enough when I was going away with my commission. I told him he was the first man I had ever known to refuse, and he seemed rather pleased. My Troop Sergeant is also very nice. I had a long talk with him, and he gave me books to read up. . . . The Major asked for my father yesterday on parade.' (In those days the inquiry had not become a slang, and carried its face value.) 'The Major in command of A Squadron is a most awfully nice man and loved by everybody, so you see I am not badly off. . . . I have a horse called Nelson. The poor beast has only one eye, and he's a demon for biting, but we've made friends already.'

It was always that way. He liked the boys at Winton House; and he liked the boys at Wellington—especially those in the Beresford Dormitory, which was his. He liked the Tommies in the D.C.L.I.; he liked everyone on board the *Plassy*; and now he liked the Troopers of the 8th Hussars. His popularity was a natural consequence.

Christmas made a pleasant break in the routine of

life, for this year there was a blessed escape from barrack celebration. Vere got leave, and spent it in Roorkee with his sister and her husband, (then Major, now General Boileau, R.E.). He came in for a round of dinner parties—enough to upset the digestion of any trooper; and there was great merriment over his borrowed plumes, for, having no evening clothes of his own at that period of his varied career, he had to borrow from his brother-in-law (a son of Anak), and the effect was not neglected by a clever caricaturist like Mrs. Boileau.

The devil tempted him with cunning indirectness by inspiring an offer of polo ponies to take back with him to Lucknow, but as usual his good sense stood the test. 'It is really,' he wrote home, 'awfully good of him' (he didn't mean the devil), 'and I should love to have them, but it wouldn't do for me to be swaggering about with two ponies.'

So the devil cleared out; and, left to themselves and the angels, these generous people gave him a bicycle instead, besides large quantities of more perishable things, which caused joy in barracks when he returned. His elder niece was then an infant and an object of great interest and commendation, ('I haven't heard a real squall since I came here'): and from first to last he had a time he could fall back on for comforts of memory in the months to come. Also his friends in the D.C.L.I. did not forget him; and there were the home letters—best things of all and most unfailing.

Having heard the satisfactory result of the first part of his examination, he was then hard at work,

in any time he could get free from regimental duty, preparing for the second. The heat was trying him badly, and the work would have been heavy even in a lower temperature.

‘I don’t quite know what has become of everyone else,’ he wrote, ‘for I seem to be on guard every second night, and haven’t a moment in the day to myself. This is Thursday and supposed to be a holiday, but I have just come back at 6 p.m. from unloading and sorting baggage from Calcutta, having been down at the station from 9 to 12 p.m. last night, and again to-day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., so I’m a bit stiff and done to the world. My routine for the last week has been as follows :—Réveille 6 a.m.; Stables 6.15 to 7 a.m.; Riding School 7.30 to 10 a.m.; Stables 10.30 a.m. to 12; Cleaning harness 12 to 2 p.m., with break for tiffin; Gymnasium 2.45 to 4.30 p.m.; Stables 5 to 5.30 p.m.; School 6.15 to 8 p.m.; and from 8 to 9 p.m. we are cleaning up for next day. You can imagine how absolutely fagged out we are by the end of the week, and even Sunday is not a rest day for me, being the great school day for extra work.’

He had a friend here—the young man who had been so much afraid of an encounter in Orderly Room; but their chances of meeting in unembarrassing circumstances were naturally limited. Vere mentions going to see him at what seemed a safe time, and finding him togging up for a fancy dress ball at the club. In the same letter he says:—‘Work is, if possible, getting harder every day. One couldn’t stand the strain for long, and men are daily

going sick by the score; but I hope it is only being piled on with the idea of getting us dismissed all drills before the hot weather comes on . . . The riding-master has taken my nice easy-going old horse away from me. He thought I was becoming an expert, but suddenly discovered that the credit was due to my mount, who, being an old stager, did everything exactly and correctly on the word of command. I simply sat there and let him obey orders on his own. Now the riding-master knows all about it, and the consequence is that I have been given a bolter. It takes me all my time to sit on the brute; and, if we have to gallop, I'm generally leading by about five hundred yards. As for jumping—there's no holding him, and all I can do is to sit tight and hope to heaven that I won't come off.' And he remarks on the advantage of compulsorily going so fast that it is impossible for faults to be picked in his riding. But he was a natural horseman, and had been accustomed to ride from his earliest childhood.

The extra turns on guard had been caused by the absence of so many men at the Durbar; and, when the regiment came back from Calcutta, he was able to see more of his bed; but in February he was in hospital with fever and pleurisy, although he was sure to be 'tons better' whenever his health was mentioned.

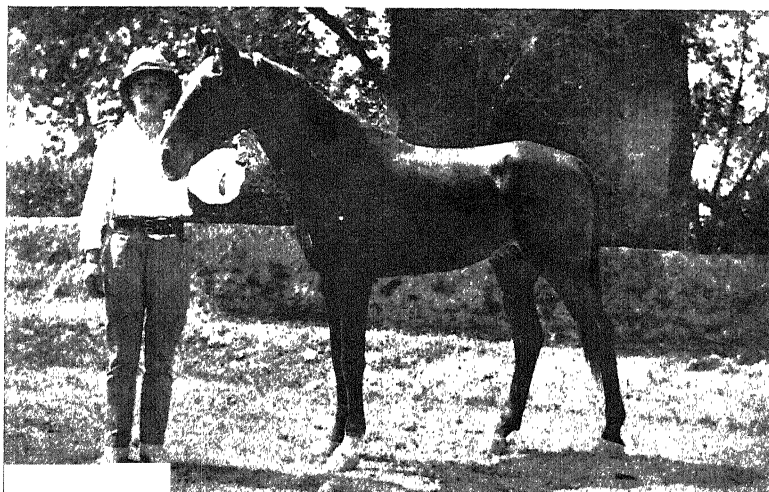
That bolting horse referred to did him rather a good turn at an inspection by General Rimington. The horse, with a double bit and martingale, bolted when going round the heads and posts, and it was

all Vere could do to pull him up and fall into the ranks again. He had become conspicuous without intending it; and the gratification of hearing the General's order: 'Fall out in front, that man with the clean saddlery,' rewarded him for all the trouble he had taken cleaning it, soaking it in acid, and staining it to a right colour.

Then came Monkey, the horse he loved as he never before or after loved any other horse. He and Monkey took to each other from the first, but Monkey's behaviour in the Sports was the cementing of their friendship. So good was it that they got into the semi-finals for individual jumping. Then 'we absolutely romped away first with the section jumping, and got great praise from the Major, who said he had seldom seen a section do so well.' He admits later that he is 'going absolutely mad over the old thing, and everyone else seems to be taken with the same mania. Even the Major asks how Monkey is going on; and at early morning stables it is the recognized thing for everyone to kiss him and salaam. It's an idiotic exhibition. The poor animal is worshipped like an idol . . . It was rather funny yesterday at Riding School: we dismounted for a few minutes at half time for a rest, and three of us began making love to Monkey, and took no notice of anything else that was going on. As a grand finale we hung on to his neck and began kissing him, when a chuckle from over the wall aroused our attention, and there were the Major, the Adjutant and the Riding Master watching us—Tableau! . . . If it were not for Monkey, I don't



TANKEY—'THE FIRSTEST FRIEND'



know where I should be now—probably in a mad-house.'

The heat was telling on him, and the really hot weather was yet to come. The combined strain of heat, hard work and anxiety about examinations had worn him to a brown thread; and, as before, his comfort came from the silent people who 'loved him with the love that knows but cannot understand.'

'Monkey, the dear old thing that gives me so much pleasure, is ripping. I *do* wish I could bring him home to you; and I keep imagining how he would nose you all over and tell you nice stories in horse language . . . I amuse myself in my spare time now by catching baby sparrows, squirrels and butterflies.' He meant for temporary companionship, not for destruction; and he gives an unconsciously impressive picture of himself sitting on his bed, mending his socks, with one of the 'baby sparrows' perched on his head. They comforted; but he was giving them his heart to tear; and especially was he giving it to Monkey, who had most power. . . .

Oh, that merciless heat! 'We drip all day long. Many of the men have got prickly heat, and I'm expecting my turn. You will be glad to hear that I and another man have been chosen as Squadron range-finders, and have to pass an exam. the day after to-morrow, under the General. I have no doubt of our passing, as this morning we got all our six ranges absolutely correct, and in the record time of half a minute per reading, two minutes being the time allowed . . . Monkey

keeps very fit. I was looking after him on guard last night, and amused myself by giving him extra feeds.'

About this time he wrote a copy of 'If' on the back of a washing list, and sent it home as an important discovery. So it was. Of course he had no idea that he might be giving Mr. D. B. Wyndham-Lewis something to be funny about; and, if he had had, he would not have cared. He did not know whether 'If' was valuable or negligible as a poem; and, if he had known, he would not have cared about that either. He proved his indifference by dropping a foot in the first verse and never missing it, because the omission did not affect the meaning. What he did know was the undeniable fact that 'If' contained the very best advice that could be given to a young man placed exactly as he was placed; and that it was given in a way he could remember. He made his own of it, and he lived up to it. To the end of his life, even without the least expectation of possessing the earth (although he did desire a small spot of it), he filled the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run, and—whatever else happened or failed to happen—to the drawing of his last breath he was a man.

At the end of March he took the second part of the examination for his commission, and did not hear of the favourable result until May. Meanwhile he was back in hospital, with his temperature at 103°. An attack of tonsilitis left him feeling a wreck; but what troubled him more was that Monkey too had gone to hospital; and, when they were both out

again, Vere spent every spare penny he had on delicacies for the horse, who had grown pitiably thin since his illness. He acknowledges being himself as thin as a rake, and badly in need of a change to the hills. The padre had made friends with him when he was in hospital, and took every opportunity of keeping up the acquaintance.

He had twice been prevented by illness from being dismissed Riding School; but now that he was at last free he gave a silver wrist-watch to the Sergeant Major who had put him through—a trifling circumstance of which he was to hear again years afterwards. Things seemed to be going fairly well with him, but Fate had a hammer in her hand, and dealt him a hard blow in the death of Monkey.

‘It was the first time I had had him out since he went to hospital last month. I had been keeping him in and buying no end of grass, sweets and biscuits to make him fat. On Friday last he seemed so fit that I took him out for some light work in the morning. He did everything splendidly, and was very fresh. We were lined up in front of the jumps, waiting for our turn, when I felt his feet go under him, and he flung me against the horse on my right. He recovered himself, only to collapse on the other side, and the poor dear old thing then gave an awful scream and fell backwards. He died after about three minutes of dreadful agony, and it was terrible to have to stand by and watch my only chum going from me in such pain.’ . . . It took him a long time to get over that loss.

The temperature was now close on 115° ; he had lost nearly a stone since leaving hospital, and a change to the hills was imperative. He went early in June to the Soldiers' Home at Landaur.

The Last Lap

*The yoke he bore shall press him still,
And long engrained effort goad
To find, to fashion, and fulfil
The cleaner life, the sterner code.*

RUDYARD KIPLING

‘WHAT a change from those awful plains! We are tired, but the air is lovely.’ He had a comrade with him, and their long journey had been both difficult and more expensive than either of them could easily afford. Were needed refreshment in mind as well as in body, for, apart from the sorrow he was feeling for his forgotten Monkey, he was desperately worried concerning the slowness of his progress towards the goal he was determined to reach. His sudden illness had overtaken him the very day on which he should have been dismissed Riding School and made a Lance-Corporal; and, when he came out of hospital, not only did he find himself just where he was before, but, to add to his disappointment, his saddlery on which he had expended such pains had been given to another man.

Considering that the slip between cup and lip had been only a matter of hours and no fault of his own, the disappointment might easily have been avoided by a greater regard for the spirit than for the letter of a regulation; but in this case red tape was made

the only consideration. A man cannot present himself for a commission until he is a corporal; and, although Vere was eventually dismissed Riding School before he went to the Hills, he was still a private, the vacancy for Lance-Corporal which had been ready for him having been filled up. Obsessed as he was with the one idea of getting through, the ill-luck of the thing preyed on him, but he was too naturally healthy not to react to the air of the Hills.

At the Soldiers' Home he met some men of the K.D.G.'s, his father's old regiment, and it amused him to talk to them, knowing that they had no idea who he was. There was also a Scotch padre, who, having got to know him when he was in hospital in Lucknow, made himself very agreeable. But the restrictions of the Home did not fit in with his plans. He wanted to wear civies and have some really comfortable khud climbing; besides, his identity as the son of his father had very soon leaked out; and, all things considered, he wanted to get away; so he and his companion pushed on to Bhimtal, where they lived in tents shared by some Inniskilling Dragoons and were perfectly free.

He was never long in any new place before he began to concern himself about animals. 'Two days ago I found a horrid old Baboo riding a wretched pony with a terribly sore back. Evidently he had covered its back with boiling tar, and burnt the poor thing frightfully. I promptly walked him off to the police, and sent in a report. I hope he'll get it in the neck.'

Then the news followed him that he had at last

been made a Lance-Corporal; and on the strength of it he felt like a new man and was ready for a big adventure . . . 'One of the men came into my tent and said that he had seen a pony on the road with his leg broken.' Vere thought of the vultures and jackals; and, although it was ten o'clock at night and quite dark, he borrowed a gun and set off with a lantern. He tramped up the khuds for about two hours before he found a beautiful little chestnut pony with two legs broken—overloaded, fallen, left to die—the usual story. There was only one thing to be done, and he did it, with a heart curdling at the job. . . .

He was back in Lucknow in July, before his twenty-first birthday, which, of course, was celebrated by a heavy mail from home; and, from that time forward, he began to experience the pleasures of anticipation; but he was always expecting good things to happen before they did or could. There would not be a vacancy for full Corporal until October; but he found himself in charge of the troop while the Troop Sergeant was on furlough, and felt encouraged. 'I commanded the troop yesterday on regimental parade, and got on splendidly—much bucked, considering that I was leading troop most of the time. To-morrow I'm to go before the Adjutant to pass out as Instructor of Gymnastics . . . No more news as to getting home, but I'm afraid it won't be until after the trooping season, as I hear none of our corporals go before March, on the last trooper' . . . It was like waiting for dead men's shoes.

In August he had another attack of tonsilitis, and that may be said to have saved his life; for, while in hospital, he developed appendicitis in an acute form, which would undoubtedly have been fatal if he had not been on the right spot for an immediate operation. The surgeon at Dilkusha wrote at once to Mrs. Boileau, who had just returned from England; and, after having been sent to the convalescent hospital at Naini Tal, where he met—as he seemed to do everywhere—some old Wellington boys, he went on to Mrs. Boileau for the furlough which was to complete his convalescence.

He was back in Lucknow by the end of the year, and sent in a requisition to the O.C. to be attached to an infantry regiment for the purpose of passing the final part of his examination, as the thing would have had to be done twice over if he had passed from a cavalry regiment.

After seemingly endless delay, he was attached to the Highland Light Infantry, where he had nothing to do with the men and lived in great comfort with the Company Storeman, who evidently regarded him as already commissioned, and waited on him assiduously. Of course he found a Wellington boy among the officers of the regiment; and, notwithstanding his love of horses, he liked well enough the change to 'foot-sloggers.' 'Everyone takes so much more interest in their work in the Infantry than in the Cavalry. You can always find someone ready to discuss points of drill, etc., and that's how one really learns. I quite think I have learnt more in these last two weeks than I had learnt before

in the whole of my service—over three years now.'

On the 21st of February, 1913, he passed the final exam. for his commission, and was warmly congratulated in having 'successfully pulled through a rotten three years' . . . 'Really everyone was most kind to me the whole time, and I couldn't have had more done for me.'

But his troubles were not yet over; for now he was, as the old saying ran, neither fish, flesh nor good red herring.' For the moment, he 'belonged' nowhere; a certain time had to elapse before he could get home; and his pockets were empty. 'The only thing I can think of is to get a tent and go off, shooting, into the jungle until my time is up.' . . . The problem was solved by an invitation from a padre—not the Scotsman of Naini Tal, but a man who had befriended him from the first in Lucknow—in whose house he stayed from the time he heard he had been gazetted to the Cameronians until he left Lucknow.

'Thank God, it's all done with at last!—Just over three years in a world of my own, and now I'm back again to civilization. By Jove, I was glad to get that cable! Every day I used to picture to myself the arrival of the boy with the telegram; and then, when he actually did come, I was in such a state of irritation I began to swear at him . . . Here I am in the padre's bungalow, all by myself and with everything I could possibly want. He went off to-day to preach at some out-of-the-way place, and won't be back till Thursday. It's really very nice to be

one's own master again, quite independent of parades, etc.'

He was dined at all the messes, and enjoyed himself mightily—perhaps more because of the sharp contrast than anything else. In fact, so many invitations came that he could not accept them all; but it was 100° in the shade, and—oh, to be in England! No joy he ever had or was ever to have could compare with the joy of that home-coming. The family, including Tankey, awaited him in Farnborough. Through torments of heat, pain, sickness and adverse circumstances he had accomplished that which he had set out to accomplish; and he came home, bringing his sheaves with him.

An Interval

They also serve who only stand and wait.

JOHN MILTON

AFTER a long leave that fulfilled all his anticipations and wishes, Vere joined the Cameronians at Stob's Castle, Hawick, and made himself immediately at home in what he described as 'a big, jolly family with the Colonel as father.' The young subalterns amused themselves in their spare time mowing the C.O.'s lawn and weeding his flowerbeds. There was outside social amusement to be had too, charming scenery, and an excellent mess. The funny thing was the ease with which a man could put the lean years behind him and take a metaphorical faring sumptuously every day as a matter of course. One stretched and relaxed, and the thing was good.

Almost immediately, his Captain being on leave, he found himself in temporary command of a company, and appreciated the usefulness of his experience in the ranks. He had the pleasant feeling of confidence engendered by knowing everything below as well as above; and there was a certain piquancy in being recognized by a man who had been a Sergeant in the 8th Hussars.

He had leave again in August, before going to Malta; and the beloved Tankey made no small part

of his enjoyment. Also this time it was not so hard to leave home, because Malta was comparatively near. It wasn't at all like going to India and knowing he would be there for years. His spirits, always high, had reached their highest point, and he got every chance of expressing them on the way out.—'I don't think anyone ever had a better voyage or enjoyed it more.'—The rags were immense. One must be very young, with a marvellous sense of having escaped from bondage, to enjoy climbing over awnings and up masts in one's pyjamas instead of going soberly to one's bunk; to scatter over the deck sheets between which one should be comfortably lying; and to keep up pillow-fights until two o'clock in the morning.

Going out to Malta was the finest thing in the world, but Malta itself merited no such description. Frankly he hated the place. He took great interest in his men, and he saw that it was bad for them. He loved opportunities of expending energy; but here the opportunities were few, and he found that he had no superfluous energy to expend. The place and the life were relaxing, and he always felt tired. He was not well, and before long he was again under the doctors. Another operation, necessitating a month in hospital, gave him plenty of time for thinking about things. He must have had a subconscious conviction that there was a great deal more in him than this kind of life was likely to call forth, but he was too humbleminded to formulate even to himself the opinion that good material was being wasted. As things were, he knew only that he

felt dissatisfied and rather lonely, notwithstanding the many who were always ready to bear him company. He wrote, 'I dream of a small bungalow on an island, with chickens, cows and horses, etc.—and you and I to run it. I wonder if it will ever come true'; and yet it would be safe to swear that he had never read,

'My dream is of an island place
Which distant seas keep lonely.'

What he was absolutely certain of was that he did not want his dream island to resemble Malta.

He dreaded St. Andrew's Day with its aftermath of drunks, and was thankful when a lamed foot gave him a legitimate excuse to honour the Saint in retirement. Still he distrusted the gods, because he knew things would be even worse on New Year's Eve; but, unresentfully, the gods befriended him again, and he was delivered from Hogmanay by a bad attack of ague and a temperature that ran up to 104°.

'I look at Tankey's picture' (a Christmas present), 'and the more I look at it the more I like it.' There was consolation in that. And he had plenty of time to write the kind of letters that tell all about everything.

An elderly relative sentimentalizes over 'the distinguished regiment,' and, quoting her remark, he dismisses her as 'a funny old crow.' Indeed his mental attitude towards those who were supposedly in a position to command respect was, and had always been, one of tolerant and kindly condescension. He was both too good-natured and too well-

bred to be otherwise than perfectly courteous to his elders; but a man may think his own thoughts, and express them privately in safe quarters. They were gentle, even when slightly contemptuous, regarding both old stagers and young 'with a "Poor thing" negligence.' Nearly everyone he mentions is a 'poor old thing' when not so highly favoured as to be a dear old thing. In India, a general, in the hollow of whose hand lay his fate, is alluded as 'a decent old stick'; a venerable member of his family, who failed to come up to the scratch in the matter of a tip, as a 'measly old animal'; and the acme of sublime patronage is reached in reference to an aunt: 'I always rather liked her in spite of her faults. She seems a kind old trout.' One can imagine Early Victorian 'elders and betters' squirming in their graves at the record of it.

His occasional summing-up of people, too, might have surprised some of them. A member of the large family of Not-Quite-Quite, who called on him in Malta, was labelled with, 'A very decent sort, but there's a "but" somewhere about him'; and a regimental officer, very much his senior, with, 'A very decent old man, strict but quite sound.' Oh, youth, youth!

Nevertheless he extracted a certain amount of enjoyment out of Malta; but he had not enough to do, and he was not feeling up to the mark.

So long ago as when he was recovering from appendicitis in India, he had been thinking of the Egyptian Army; but this was not an end to be arrived at any old way or by any old means. Still,

to get to Africa would be a move in the right direction. Things arranged themselves; he applied for the West African Regiment, and was in it before war broke out and the whole world rocked to its foundations.

An extremely trying time followed, for he seemed no nearer than before to the sort of work he wanted, and he learnt how difficult it is to get out of a place when you have once got into it up to the neck.

In September, 1914, he wrote from Freetown: 'Here I am still, feeling like a whipped dog. Six companies went off to the Cameroons on Saturday, leaving behind two companies which are to be sent on shortly as reinforcements. The General's instructions were that I was to be left behind by myself to train recruits as quickly as possible in case of need, which means that I shall have about 280 to 300 men, consisting of recruits and those unfit for service. I have been training recruits ever since I came out here, but to have the job of doing it by myself *and* teaching them how to shoot, to say nothing of the interior management, is a bit steep, and the thought of being the only one left behind while all the others are on active service is too appalling. The only comfort is that I'll have such a lot to do I shan't have time to think about it. I'm taking it extra hard, because I was practically promised that I should go with them. My only chance now is that someone may go down with fever and be sent here to relieve me. One must only hope for the best! . . . On Thursday four French transports, escorted by a cruiser, came in with 200

native troops, 500 whites, 500 horses, and 20 guns, to pick up our fellows to go on to the Cameroons. . . . Owing to a mistake only four companies got ready and were to be on board at 2 p.m. on Saturday. At 9 a.m. that day orders came for the two remaining companies to get ready to go at once. The Dépôt Company was handed over to me, and there and then I had to make the remaining two companies up to war strength, get every man medically examined, issue ammunition and equipment, and transfer certain documents. At 3 p.m. they marched out of barracks thoroughly equipped; but you can imagine the state I was left in, and it has taken me every second of my time since to get things straight. It was harder on the officers going than on anyone else, for they had only about twenty minutes to throw a few things into a bag and clear off. Until the small hours this morning I was packing up their rooms, etc., and it was all very funny.' (Ideas of fun differ.) 'I got chits in pencil, written on all sorts of paper, from most of them, giving the addresses of relatives at home, asking me to write if anything happened to them, and telling me what to do with their boxes, etc. When I did get up to my room after they had moved off, I found it absolutely strewn with valuables to be looked after, including five dogs, a monkey and a cat—these, added to my own snake, which is loose and crawls about my room. Picture the collection! I have, however, managed to dispose of all the animals except two dogs . . . I'm miserable at being left behind . . . It jars like anything.'

His men too were champing the bit, and he treasured one pathetic appeal for which the services of a professional letter-writer had evidently been engaged, the soldier for whom it was written imploring that he might not be left behind, as not only he himself but his whole family would feel disgraced if he did not take an active part in the war. There were among them no conscientious objectors, or skin preservers, ready to live smugly in conditions of freedom bought for them by the lives of others.

At the end of the month an application was sent in for his services in the Cameroons, but the application was ignored; and news was coming in of atrocities the knowledge of which made inactivity all the harder. No black prisoners were taken by the enemy; and if a white man fell into the hands of natives fighting under the Germans he was cut up as Ju-ju. 'A subaltern of the West African Frontier Force got wounded in the leg in Northern Kamerun; a search party found him, and left him, to get a stretcher. When they came back the poor fellow's head had been hacked off and his body frightfully mutilated. Most of these natives are cannibals, and all of them devils . . . A rather amusing mild retribution happened last week. We had to find a guard over the German prisoners in Freetown, and one night, after the officer had gone to bed, he was waked up by great singing and dancing. He rushed out, and found that our men had pulled one of the wretched Germans out of his room, tied him up, and were doing a war dance round him, brandishing

their knives within an inch of his face, and yelling, "We go shoot you and chop (eat) you, plenty damn bad German!"'

Of course the amusement was promptly put an end to; but, considering the stories that had been coming in, it was hardly to be expected that the awakened officer's sympathy was entirely with the prisoner.

'I was remarking at mess yesterday that I hadn't heard any one laugh for weeks. One gets to the stage where nothing interests one.' . . . It was just routine and disappointment.

Then the General invited him to dinner and made soothing remarks about his being kept in Freetown. He carried away the impression that the work he was doing was regarded as very satisfactory; and, later on, when he was shown his confidential report, he knew beyond a doubt how highly his services had been valued. Further hospitalities and much friendliness followed; but these were no consolation to Vere, bitterly wishing himself in the place of his cousin who had been wounded in France, and calling the cousin a lucky devil to have had his share of fighting, no matter how he paid for it.

There were a great many adjectives in his confidential report, and it was pleasant to know that he was considered thoroughly reliable, hard-working, most capable in every respect, painstaking and efficient; but he wanted a chance to show any qualities he had to the Germans as well as to the General, and the chance was a long time coming.

'I forgot to tell you in my last letter that I met Capt. Trench (Marines) at the General's when I

went up for tennis. You remember about him?—the man who was shut up in a fortress for two years by the Germans on a charge of espionage. He was wonderfully interesting to talk to, and told me a good many of his experiences . . . It was Trench too who was instrumental in the finding of the *Scharnhorst*. He got off at the Canaries, made up as a broken-down old Spaniard, went round all the dirty public-houses, and got hold of full information as to where the collier was going to meet the *Scharnhorst* . . . An extraordinarily capable man, and I don't suppose there are many like him. . . .

'Mac has just been in to see me with a bit of news. He was burying one of our men this afternoon, and on his way through Freetown to the cemetery a Creole broke through the ranks and made some beastly signs at the coffin as it passed; whereupon the men broke from the ranks, flew at the Creole, and, before anything could be done to stop them, had torn every stitch of clothing off him and knocked him senseless. A policeman came up to lay down the law, but was promptly engulfed in the maelstrom, and, when he emerged, went off in a hurry, minus his trousers. A crowd of course collected before the men were got together again and moved off, leaving the Creole, naked and battered, lying on the side of the road. Just an instance of what a bad effect missionaries have on the native.' (Without undue prejudice in favour of missionaries, one would like to know how they were implicated in this particular instance.)

Still was hope deferred and the war dragged on

without him. A gleam of humour anywhere was welcome, and in the middle of March he wrote: 'Yesterday I went up to the General's again to play tennis, and we had some quite good games. We sat and talked afterwards for about an hour, and then they suggested that I should stay to dinner and wear the General's evening clothes! I accepted, but sent for my own. However my orderly took so long to come that I had to take what I was offered, and a most comical sight I looked, with a collar about three sizes too large, trousers turned up three times, and the end of the dinner-jacket reaching nearly to my knees. We had great jokes about it, and the General was frightfully amused. However, just as we were going in to dinner, my own things arrived, so I did a lightning change, and came down looking less like a comic turn.' He must have been reminded of the old days in India when he had worn his tall brother-in-law's clothes and been caricatured by his sister.

'It was kind of them to ask me to stay, and we had a very pleasant quiet evening, discussing hens with my hostess, who was much interested to hear that you went in for them.'

A few days later he wrote, 'The following is an extract from a letter to the C.O.: "Please note that the following cable has been received from the G.O.C. Expeditionary Force, Cameroons: 'Gorges' (our colonel) 'requests that Lieutenant Fergusson, W.A.R., be sent down immediately to replace Lieut. Andrews, killed.'" Answer, "From G.O.C. Sierra Leone to G.O.C. Cameroons. No officers available.

Lieut. Fergusson will be sent on first opportunity." Isn't it just my luck? This is the second time they have applied for me. However, the General sent me a message by his A.D.C. to say that, although he personally did not wish me to go, I should be sent as soon as relief comes out from home, which should be very soon. You see we have only one officer per company now, so it's only natural he couldn't spare anyone.'

When Colonel Gorges took a draft to the Cameroons in September '15, his farewell to Vere was, 'Good-bye, little man. God bless you, and may He make the road to the Cameroons clear for you before I go home.'

But he was not one of those who pray and wait for an answer with folded hands. Already two applications had been made without result for Vere's services in the Cameroons, but the third and lucky one was made in the middle of October. A telegram came from General Dobell: 'Col. Gorges asks whether Lt. Fergusson can be sent for duty here if Capt. Dakeyne is sent to relieve him.' And further resistance seemed impossible. The reply was: 'No objection to Lt. Fergusson proceeding on duty to Cameroons provided I receive the services of an experienced officer in exchange. As Mr. Fergusson has most ably done the duties of Adjutant here I have much pleasure in recommending that he be given an opportunity of seeing Active Service.'

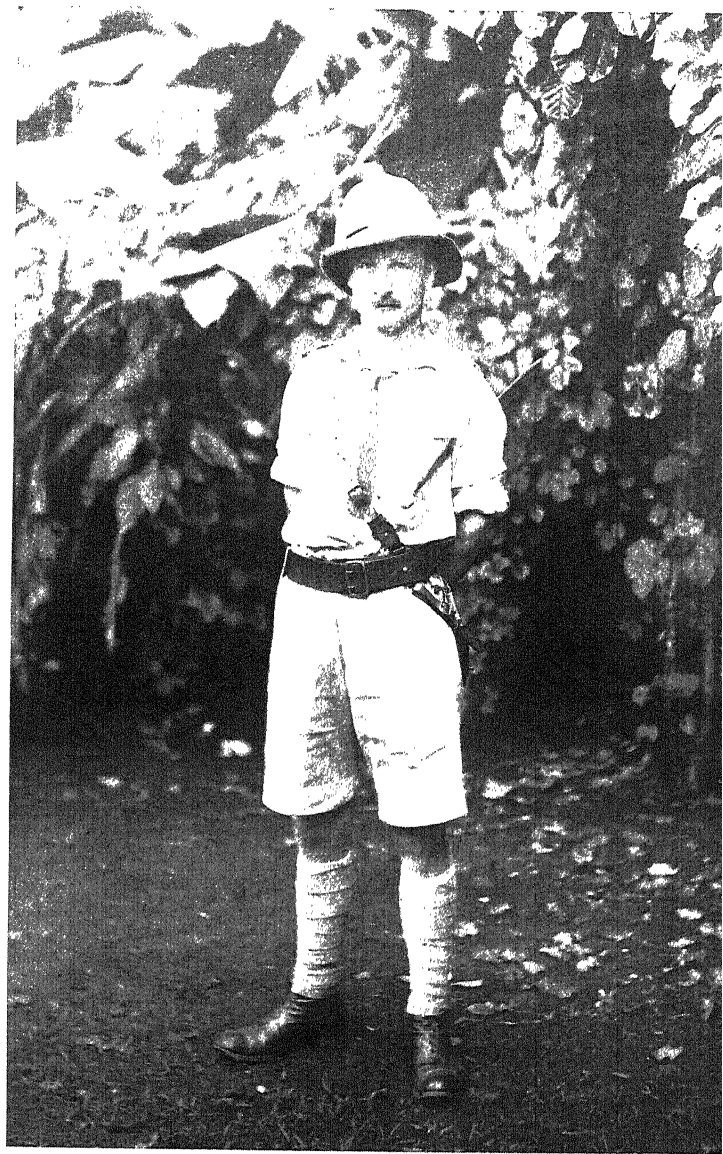
So at last, after all the discouragement and boredom of waiting, orders came for him to leave with a draft on the 27th of November in the *Appam*.

Emancipation

*My soul all weary with strange wayfaring,
(What I have grasped is far from my desire)
I press along, still straitly following
The cloud of smoke by day, by night of fire.
I know my goal; my seeking shall not tire.*

CLAUDE PENROSE

JUST before Christmas, 1915, he wrote from the Cameroons in evidently high spirits: 'A line to say that I'm back from our small expedition to Bana. We started off on the 13th, with 200 carriers and 200 soldiers, and I quite enjoyed myself. The country is very lovely indeed and appears to be healthy. We took three days going, and generally camped with Kings on the way, who fed us on eggs and chickens, which are really a luxury here. On arrival at Bana, we found that the Germans had left the fort, but were reported to be in a town about three miles away, so I started off with fifty men, only, alas! to find the birds had flown. Before I got back, a message came in to say that the King of Bana was harbouring two Germans in his town, so off I went again, but discovered no trace of them. . . . I found that the Colonel had been sent to hospital at Duala. The Staff Officer of the Northern District had also gone to Duala for his health, so here I am, O.C., W.A.R., Adjutant, Staff Officer Northern



IN THE CAMEROONS

District, and O.C. Northern District until another man arrives; so you see I have my work cut out.'

He had his first scrap with the Germans in January '16; and shortly after that the C.O. went down with blackwater fever. There was more fighting in February, and dysentery was rife. Later in the month he was given command of a force of W.A.R.'s to co-operate with the French and push on to Ngoa; and in March received orders to embark for Duala. The rains had begun, and dysentery had become a scourge.

The first intimation of having got his captaincy came to him in a note which would have satisfied Mrs. Micawber's ideal of 'nothing superfluous': 'Dear old bird, congrats!' Peace reigned now, and the French were taking over the Cameroons from General Dobell, who left for England at the beginning of April, after handing over.

It was in April, after combined operations, that a much quoted speech was made by the French Commandant, who proclaimed to all and sundry: 'If we wanted more supplies, Fergusson was the one to bring them to us; if reinforcements—Fergusson; if orders or news—Fergusson; if a good friend to amuse us—Fergusson.' It was always 'Mon cher Fergusson.' And the French gave H.M.T. *Akabo* a great send-off when the W.A.R.'s left Duala for Sierra Leone, the French boats' crews cheering, bugles blowing, and every sign of goodwill and gratitude promising to follow them.

After a well-earned leave, spent in Farnham, Vere reached Alexandria in June, and went on to Cairo,

where he met his father, and reported to the Egyptian War Office, after which he spent a short time with his father at Tel-el-Kebir. He was now in the Egyptian Army, according to his long nourished desire, and must have experienced almost as much gratification as when he gained his commission. Returning to Cairo, he picked up a friend, had a fairly comfortable run to Assuan, and went up the Nile on the dahabiyeh S.W. *Toski*, which was over forty-five years old and had taken Gordon part of the way to Khartoum on his last trip.

From Khartoum: 'The Governor sent down his trap to meet us, and also a host of wonderfully dressed servants, so we drove in great style to his very palatial house, where we had a bath, booted and spurred ourselves, and had breakfast. The Governor was kindness itself, took us to the War Office, and showed us where to report, etc. The first person we saw was the Adjutant-General, who offered to do anything he could for us; and then, after a long chat, told me that, as I had been in the tropics for so long and had a good knowledge of African troops, he was going to post me to the Equatorial Battalion, with a special boundary job. So I'm off on the 26th to Tambura, a two months' trek from here, the journey being made partly by water, partly by donkey, and the last 150 miles on foot. What a grand out-of-the-way place! Tambura is in the extreme South-West corner of the Sudan, 5° north of the equator, in Bahr-el-Ghazal, and is on the Belgian border. There will be no other white man within hundreds of miles, and I have

supreme power. The Post consists of about 150 men, and a machine-gun—the men belonging to the Yum-Yum tribe. The company has only just been raised and is not yet up to strength; and I am to recruit, train, instruct, and put down local risings, which seem to be frequent. In fact I'm a ruddy autocrat with the power of life and death! I am to bring stores with me for one year, for, as you may imagine, it's almost impossible to get anything sent down. I don't yet know how they manage about letters, but I fancy a post leaves Khartoum every two months.

'We are staying at the Sudan Club, where we have quite nice rooms and are done very well. It is situated on the banks of the White Nile, quite close to the Sirdar's palace. The Sirdar is at present at Sinkat, near Port Sudan—the hill station of the Sudan . . . Having gathered all this information from the War Office, we came back to the club and had lunch, afterwards went with the Governor over to Omdurman by launch to watch the polo, and I met my C.O., who seemed most awfully nice and kind, and is frightfully keen on the Equatorials. He told me everything about the place, showed me round Omdurman, where our Headquarters are, gave me all sorts of hints, and is coming to help me to buy stores, etc., to-morrow . . . He handed over to me a Yum-Yum soldier orderly to take back—such a funny little man, just like a Ghurka, wearing a brown jersey, shorts, puttees, and a soft straw hat with a red and green hackle on one side. He doesn't speak Arabic, and has of course no English,

but talks away in Yum-Yum to me who don't know a word of it. Goodness knows how I am going to learn the language, but I suppose it will come in time.

'The Governor is getting for me a small boy servant who speaks only Arabic, so I'm learning hard. The difficulty is that one has to know proper Arabic so as to be able to read the drill-books, etc., and one must be able to speak colloquial Arabic, which is an entirely different language; and then—Yum-Yum! . . . I hear I shall find at Tambura exactly the same sort of country and climate as in the Cameroons, with the usual heavy rains most of the year, so I shall be in my old element again. Really I couldn't have wished for a nicer job, all on one's own, with the responsibility of raising and training the men; but I shall be a regular bushman at the end of my service. . . .

'*Everyone* here has been most wonderfully kind in every way, and the only answer one gets to thanks is, "The Egyptian Army is a big family, and we all help each other irrespective of rank." . . . Khartoum is a grand place, quite cool in comparison with Cairo, and well laid out, with broad streets, and some quite good shops and very nice houses. Practically no natives speak English, so J. and I went about laden with various dictionaries, and it would have amused you to see us standing in the road, trying to speak to a native, with all our books open.'

On the 26th of July he left Khartoum with Major Austin, R.E., and Major Parsons-Smith,

R.A.M.C., both of the Egyptian Army, taking rifles of sufficient variety to meet the requirements of every kind of game, fifty-five loads of stores, and eighteen loads of personal belongings; and it was a tremendous job packing these stores into boxes of 45 lbs. weight for the carriers. The caravanserai included two soldier orderlies, a cook, a syce, an odd boy, two mules and a donkey. The doctor was to go the whole way to Tambura, as news had arrived of many deaths from sleeping sickness, and it seemed well to be ready for emergencies. Speaking of the amount of stuff and sporting outfit he found it necessary to take, he wrote: 'The outlay has been about £250, which sounds big, but it is a year or eighteen months' supply, so doesn't really come to very much, and, if I can manage to get my four elephants, it ought to work out on the credit side . . . People seem to keep very fit out here, and there doesn't appear to be much fever. Please remember we shan't have libraries or bookstalls at Tambura, and let me have the *Nineteenth Century*, *Blackwood's* and *National Review* regularly . . . We embarked in a Sternwheeler at Omdurman; and on five barges, which we push in front of us, are two companies of the 10th Sudanese Regt., with their wives and other belongings. The boat is quite a decent size for a Nile steamer, and I have a small cabin, only wanted for changing and keeping my clothes, as I sleep on deck in my camp bed. We have meals in a mosquito-house amidships, and are doing ourselves pretty well, as our amusement is to see whose cook will put up the best meal. So far, my

fellow has absolutely swept the board. I was told that he was a bad cook; but he sends up a dinner not to be got at Prince's!—Salmon-mayonnaise-apricot-Melba sort of things—to say nothing of his sponge rolls, which are the best I've ever tasted; and I pay him only £2 a month . . . At first, after leaving Khartoum, the journey was rather uninteresting, sand everywhere, and no game to be seen. However, there was a gradual change to short scrub, then dry grass, and now we are in most perfect country, with high green grass, and great trees everywhere. In fact one gets the impression of going through a big private park, on a river varying from 100 ft. to 800 ft. in width. The place is crammed with game of all sorts. Crocodiles, hippos and snakes bob up all over the river; and, sitting on the steamer, one can see leopards and rhinos. We know there are lions, but haven't seen any yet. It's all wonderful, and I only wish you were here to see it . . . We are now getting into the best shooting country, so expect to make expeditions whenever the steamer stops, and at any rate every day from Wau to Tambura. I bought a mule and a donkey at Malakal and brought them on board—a great pair, and looking very fit.'

A fortnight later, he wrote from on board the *S.G.S. Omdurman*: 'Since my last letter, we have changed boats twice. We had a very unpleasant four days going through the Narrows, which is a huge expanse of Sud, or marsh, about sixty miles long by thirty broad—no game, or even dry land to be seen, and of course no trees. The air was thick

with mosquitoes; I've never seen anything like it; and our condition was not improved by our being put on a very small barge with two very small rooms and an unpleasant bathroom, in which we had to sleep and feed, as the rest of the accommodation was taken up by our kit. However, we've finished with it now, thank goodness, and are on a very nice steamer, going through wonderfully pretty country where game is plentiful and mosquitoes comparatively few. Up to the present we've seen hippos, rhinos, crocs, various sorts of gazelle and buck, a herd of about 130 elephants that we couldn't get at, a herd of giraffe, a cheetah, leopards, monkeys of all kinds, and of course snakes as well as huge fish and a great variety of birds. Unfortunately we are already late in arriving at Wau, and can't stop for game . . . We have had a most enjoyable trip, so far; but feel we have no right to it with the war on, and I wish I had got France instead of this . . . I've had to give my fine cook the sack for dishonesty and insolence, and must let my wild man cook for me until I get someone else . . . The man I'm relieving came down a few days ago, and said the road was in an awful state, overgrown and flooded; but I got used to that sort of thing in the Cameroons, and think we ought to have some fun. Our days on board are all much the same. We get up at seven, breakfast at eight, then sit on deck and pot crocodiles until lunch at one; then sleep or read until tea, then more rifle practice till dinner; and, after a few tunes on the gramophone, we turn in for the night. I am thinking of making a collection of feathers for

Varuna' (the 'little Queen' sister) 'to wear in her hats; some of them here are wonderfully pretty . . . The mule is a great pet—quite a contrast to most mules, and crazy about sugar . . . We should be in Wau to-morrow, where I expect to stay in the 14th Sudanese Mess until I get carriers for my trek south.'

On the 23rd of September, when within eighteen miles of Tambura, he wrote: 'Captain Parsons-Smith and I left Wau on the 11th, with 70 odd carriers. We made a late start, owing to rain, and went only twelve miles the first day. The journey has been uninteresting and tedious, as we have had to fight our way through grass that was sometimes over 20 ft. high—immense stuff. The going was not improved by rain, and we haven't had dry feet since we started on the march.

'All the rivers are much swollen of course; and, as we have passed only two bridges, wading where there weren't any, you can imagine the moist time we had. In such high grass, shooting has been absolutely impossible. Indeed we have seen only one hartebeest and some baboons, with the usual plenty of snakes; but there are tracks everywhere of all sorts of animals—elephant, lion, leopard, buck, etc., and at night we hear the lions roaring, and no end of weird noises we can't put a name to. Yesterday we passed through a village where the Chief had had four of his wives eaten by lions only a few nights ago. At least, he said so. The only fresh food we have had has been doves and guinea-fowl, both of which are excellent. It is only in the last two days we have been passing villages, the first part of the

country we went through having been absolutely uninhabited. Our carriers have done their work quite well, for we have been doing very long marches. I think our longest was 25 miles in a day, which I am afraid was too much for the poor devils, some of whom are awful weeds . . . What we could see of the country was flat and uninteresting until we came two days ago to a range of curiously shaped and absolutely smooth granite hills.'

Behind them lay his temporary kingdom; and on the 26th of September, '16, he arrived at Tambura.

Tambura

*It was not a big brass General that came;
But a man in khaki kit who could handle men a bit.*

RUDYARD KIPLING

THE day after his arrival, he wrote: 'Here I am at last, installed in a big tukl, or native-built house, with a grass roof and mud walls, in a very good position on a spur overlooking a little valley with a range of hills some miles in front. I have a large store-room detached from the house, servants' houses and kitchens also, and a large garden with the usual native fruits. There is no meat to be got here at all, no milk, no chickens, and very little to be shot. I found an Inspector here, Major Larkin, A.S.C., who runs the civil side until January, when I take over from him. Tambura, which is the absolute centre of Africa, is a very pretty little place built on a small hill, with one or two native shops, but no population, all the people (Zandes) being scattered about the surrounding country. The troops are wild men, not disciplined, but not bad at the little drill they know. Unfortunately I found on my arrival that two of the native officers were inciting the troops to mutiny and drop their work. I packed one of them off to Wau without delay, giving him no time to make more trouble, and now I am busy investigating the case against the other, which is an awkward job, as I don't know much

about the country's customs at present . . . I went yesterday to a large dance given by the native chiefs—quite a fine show, where we were given morissa (the native wine) to drink, and some native food which wasn't very agreeable. The dances, naturally, were nude, and rather funny; and at the end of them we were followed home by a crowd of inhabitants. I fear, since going on trek, my Arabic has been rather neglected; and I am somewhat handicapped in dealing with my officers, none of them being able to speak English . . . My Quartermaster Sergeant has now gone sick and is being sent up to hospital, so I have no one to do my pay-list, which is all in Arabic; consequently, as a newcomer, I am in a nice hole . . . I had a present of four wives sent up to me yesterday by the native Chief here. Needless to say, they were returned with thanks; but I gave them some beads, to show that no slight was intended by my refusal! The local natives seem nice, jolly people, but it evidently doesn't take much to upset them. Please send me out some beads, and various tricks and oddments of the jack-in-the-box type; also a pair of leather gaiters that slip on easily. One must have some way of discouraging the snakes, which swarm here.

'About a dozen small children came to call on me last night—such dear little playful things with great big eyes, and flowers in their hair. They stayed quite a time while I fed them with fruit . . . You will see when you get the enclosed photographs that the women here wear nothing except an occasional bunch of leaves.'

Later on, in October, he wrote: 'I have had my hands full in office, working daily until 5 p.m., unravelling accounts and books, which I found in an awful mess. The native doctor helps me with my Arabic to fill his time.' . . . He was in the middle of musketry instruction; building new houses for native officers; reorganizing sanitation of the lines; planting trees for shade in future years; and, as relaxation, having his own house pink-washed with local clay.

The infrequency of letters was a real privation. Just then carriers were not allowed to come to Tambura from Wau because of the sleeping sickness, so the coming of mail depended on any casual person travelling in that direction, unless a special messenger were sent from Tambura on chance. In November he was still busy with the musketry course, and not at all satisfied with the progress of the men. Getting up at 5 a.m. for breakfast, he kept them at it from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and after lunch was busy with office work and seeing prisoners until 4.30, when he would try to get to work in his garden. Rain was badly needed, and the country was in flames, the natives having set fire to the grass. Work in the station came to a standstill while everyone was employed gathering telebun (seed used to make flour), no substitute but maize being available. In the middle of the month he gave the troops a big dance, with an improvised cotillion consisting of a scramble for small coins and coloured handkerchiefs.

He was keeping hens now, and their favourite laying place was a box of blotting-paper in the

clerk's office. He had also two pet lion cubs that lived in the kitchen; but they came to an evil and untimely end. The cook starved them. If only they had lived long enough, they might have prevented this by eating the cook . . . Then something really interesting happened. His most industrious hen hatched out a chicken in the waste-paper-basket, and the chicken was given the name of Abdulla Effendi Fergusson—just to keep him in the family.

At the beginning of January '17, when there had been no mail for six weeks, he wrote to Headquarters offering to forfeit his three months' leave if the Powers Above would send him to Mesopotamia, or the Balkans, or the Palestine Front; and, possibly as a means of keeping himself from thinking about the war, of which he had had no news for so long, he began making changes in the men's kit and designing badges to distinguish pioneers, regular police, buglers and hospital staff. Also he started 'Fergusson's Boy Scouts,' the uniform being a yellow loin-cloth and a yellow cap with a big F in front and a feather at the side. He enlisted forty little boys between the ages of seven and fifteen, and had them taught carpentry and brick-making; also the making of hats and sandals as lighter work.

In January '17, he took over, as arranged, the civil administration from Major Larkin, from whom presently came an S.O.S. in the form of a native runner, all his carriers having bolted and left him stranded, to get on as best he could. Vere sent down a new batch of carriers to him, which was the only thing to be done; and in February he turned his

attention to elephants, and took a party out from Tambura in search of them.

All the sheiks of the surrounding tribes visited his camp, bringing food for the men and showing every desire to oblige; and his Boy Scouts proved very useful on the expedition. He saw no elephants that time, and his shooting was chiefly to provide food for the men.

He mentioned with regret the murder of a hippopotamus, which he considered unsporting. 'No fun shooting poor old Hip, but the men wanted meat. They are now making beasts of themselves, chewing it raw. Nothing is left!' The elephants had cleared over the Congo border; and, although he was awakened at night by lions roaring, they did not allow themselves to be seen. He was supplied by the natives with plenty of chickens and eggs, which he paid for with salt and coloured handkerchiefs, so that there was not a desperate alternative between raw hippopotamus and starvation. Numbers of natives came to him to have wounds dressed and pains cured, and he was invariably successful in this, which was the very earliest of his medical work among them.

Just before the expedition returned to Tambura, he came across fresh elephant tracks, and, leaving the rest of his followers, he set off in pursuit with two soldiers. 'I walked from 5 a.m. till 2 p.m.—without breakfast—but they were nowhere to be seen; so, as I could not leave the men and carriers without food, I gave up the chase, and, on my return journey, I ran into a herd of buffaloes, and

then some giraffes . . . At 9 p.m. I saw a lioness and two cubs, but had no chance of a shot. When I got back to camp I was greeted with the news that my cook had gone out to find me, taking my bed and food! . . . I had a fire lit; and, after a bath in a bucket, and dinner taken from my reserve box, I slept on boxes by the fire. The cook returned next day at 11 a.m., having followed the elephant tracks all night, and at 6 a.m. finding himself in a herd of about two hundred. Rotten luck! There was nothing for it but to return; so, having paid the Chief with a couple of my old vests for the carriers' food, we got off, but did only about twelve miles. Both the cook and I were on our last legs. Next day we started at 4 a.m. and marched till 8 p.m., halting two hours. We must have done thirty miles, but the carriers were lightly laden, and all arrived home very cheery. On arrival I found "secret" orders awaiting me to proceed to the French Congo and help the French against some native tribes, so I now await the French commander's instructions. My Arabic exam. papers have arrived, and I shall wait until Larkin returns to "see fair." There was also a letter from the Sirdar, saying I am no longer a special service officer for the war, but under contract for two years . . . Counting myself, there have been only ten white men here since we took Tambura over from the French, who were the only whites the natives had even seen. They think the "red men from the North," as they call us, have been especially chosen by the Big God, who has taken us out of the earth and given us all the riches we want.

Having seen so few of us, they think we are all brothers . . . My bricks have now risen to the number of 20,000, at the rate of 1500 a day. The little Scouts are doing splendidly. They have lessons in making "tatties" (roll-up screens) and in making hats for the troops. The small girls amuse themselves catching fish for me in the river.'

The box of toys and gimcracks he had asked for came at the beginning of March, and proved an enormous success: 'They could not possibly have been better. You should have seen the faces of my people. They have never seen anything like them before in their lives, and are so awfully proud of having them. The children can't understand the dolls yet, and seem a bit confused about the toy animals. Of course the boys are crazy about their noise instruments, but they are not allowed to blow them in the station. I had quite an amusing case brought to the Orderly Room this morning: one of the women had been examining a small boy's toy elephant, and pulled off its trunk; whereupon the boy hauled her off to Orderly Room, with three small girls as witnesses that she had broken it! Funny little blighters. Diana's Easter egg chickens caused great excitement, especially among the grown-up women, who recognised the species at once. In fact the success has been so great, I'd be glad to get a consignment of such things now and then. You can't imagine what pleasure and excitement it causes . . . I had my first Arabic exam. yesterday, and think I got on all right.'

He spent about three weeks in the French Congo.



FERGIE BEY

'My job was to guard 100 miles of frontier, but not a shot was fired. Our scouts took forty-one prisoners, and I think the poor wretches were glad to be taken, as they were half-starved. I got letters of thanks from the French Governor . . . The footballs have arrived and are very popular. Of course the men had never seen one, and are never tired of playing . . . My commission into the Egyptian Army came by the last mail—a fine document drawn up in Turkish and signed by the Sultan . . . There is a bad kind of witchcraft creeping into the neighbourhood . . . I sent out another Patrol to-day against a force of natives, who had raided my District and carried off ivory and women . . . Just in from my first funeral here. One of my corporals died of dysentery. I had a firing party and buglers, and it made a great impression, as hitherto their dead had been, without ceremony, shoved into a hole by their own people . . . Bought 700 odd spears from a native trader for £46, as the men wanted them to buy wives with. They pay from five to thirty spears for a woman.' One would like to know how the scale of payment was arranged—whether by the beauty or usefulness of the lady.

The funeral was recorded in May; the imminent return of Major Larkin; and the arrival of a gramophone, which must have been an event of some importance; also the sowing of 20 acres of Indian corn. It was then time for a break in the routine; and an opportunity for some excitement came just when it was badly wanted.

Nimrod

I wish my mother could see me now, with a fence post under my arm.

RUDYARD KIPLING

VERE wrote in June from the Bikki River, which he had reached in the course of an elephant hunt: 'I arrived here after a two and a half days' march to find that I had at last run into elephants. I heard them bellowing during the night, and early this morning; and at 5 a.m. I started out after them. I hadn't far to go before I found them—all eating quite peacefully, flapping their big ears and playing about. It was an enormous herd—well over two hundred; but, as is their usual custom, all the big males were in the centre whilst all the females and young made a huge circle round them. So the only thing to be done was to get into the middle of them and chance it.

'Luckily they can't see much beyond their trunks, and the tearing up of trees, etc., when they're eating, prevents them from hearing: so the only thing to consider is the wind, and about that you have to be jolly careful. However, I went in with two soldiers and crawled around, inspecting, to find a big tusker. At last I found a monster, almost in the centre of the lot; so we crawled up to within about twenty yards, and I let fly. I hit him hard in the region of

the heart, and he reeled over. More of him I couldn't, or, rather, didn't see, for the next thing I knew was that the whole herd was charging down on us. I quite thought that we were their objective, so we stood still and blazed all over the place to frighten them off.

'Luckily some of them turned; but others passed at a great pace, rather too close to be pleasant, tearing up whole trees and bushes in their hurry. Really they were not paying any attention to us, and made straight for the wounded one, lifted him up with their tusks and carried him off. The row of course was awful, and, needless to say, I was in such a devil of a funk that I didn't quite realize what was going on. We followed them up as quickly as possible, but had only gone a few hundred yards when we found them all lined up, with their trunks in the air and big ears stretched out, waiting for us. Then they must have got wind of us (and disliked the aroma) for suddenly they all turned and fled, and I must say the relief was great. Luckily we followed them up again instead of turning back, for the blighters made a circle around and came up in rear of us, so we pocketed dignity and ran like the devil. Curiously enough, they seemed to become quite peaceful again, strutting along quietly in line, and halting now and then to listen. We plucked up courage to get within about twenty yards, and were waiting for another tusker to come along, when a big female spotted us, gave a loud roar, and then the whole herd cleared like lightning . . . I followed up the tracks next day till 2.30 p.m., going hard the

whole time until I heard some elephant bellowing quite close by; and I went up, but found they were only females with one male, and that not a big one. He had round him a circle of about ten females with their young, but we managed to get into the centre unnoticed. One shot in the brain felled him at once, and the females rushed to him; but a couple of shots sent them flying, and we were left with our prize. The tusks, I knew, were not big; but on extracting them, after two hours' work with axes and matchets, I found them to be only about 40 or 50 lbs. each—a disgraceful sell; and I have my doubts if they'll ever cover the tax (£10) for me. However, it was my first elephant, and one learns only by paying for experience. Unfortunately I saw nothing of the monster I shot yesterday, so I'm afraid he's lost to me. I have just had news of elephants quite close, and am off after them to-morrow at 4 a.m. if the moon serves me properly; and I hope to get a better bag. It was quite a tame show to-day compared with yesterday's, but then a big herd always does give sport—and sometimes too much. While I write, the carriers and local natives are making beasts of themselves. They don't even wait to cook the meat, but eat it "saarkit," as we say—raw—just like animals. It makes one sick to see them munching the stuff, intestines and all.

'Now, at 7 p.m., there isn't very much of the beast left. I am having the hairs from his tail made into bracelets, and hope to send one in this letter . . . I did a great bit of bridging to-day, to get over a swollen river about forty yards wide, and did it in

an hour and a half—quite good for an amateur, though of course it was only native style.’

On his next attempt to follow up a wounded elephant, he started off, as soon as he received information, with a water-bottle and two heads of Indian corn in his pocket, and swam a river, leaving behind any of his men who were not equal to the crossing. Those whose legs were long enough waded after him, with the water up to their chins, keeping their mouths shut and their noses skyward. His trouble led to nothing on that occasion; but he got another tusker next day; and then, having mended his boots with bits of wire from sardine-tin openers, he turned his attention to the fruits of the earth and recorded his discoveries of delicious wild cherries and bitter oranges.

Whenever there was nothing else he was obliged to do, he went on writing . . . ‘I had a letter from Major Larkin yesterday to say he had run out of his milk supply and wanted more, so he must be ill, for milk here is like gold, and is only used for medicinal purposes. I possess only six small tins . . . I wish you could see me now, with everything in rags. I tore my pants getting over a khor on the trunk of a tree, and had to get my servant to sew the seat together with a piece of tree bark’ (as it might be a hair of the dog that bit them), ‘and I might just as well be without the puttees I am wearing, for they are more like cobwebs than anything else. My hair is a sort of muddy mouse-colour, and my general appearance that of an ugly duckling. I’ve had those puttees for two years, and they owe me nothing,

but I cling to them. One's affection for clothes increases with their age . . . I killed two snakes on the road yesterday, one quite a large one, which the carriers marched off with in great delight—to eat! I also saw some fine birds that I coveted for Varuna, but didn't dare to fire lest I should frighten away possible elephants.

'I have two big Chiefs travelling about with me, and they are invaluable in getting me news and keeping me supplied with chickens and native vegetables. Without their help I shouldn't have much chance of doing anything. The tusks of the elephant I shot on the 8th have just been brought in. He died shortly after I left him. The tusks are a magnificent pair, standing about five feet high, as thick as my thigh, and it's all I can do to lift one off the ground. I'm tremendously bucked, and now hope to get my fourth (and last for this year) in the course of a few days, before I return to Tambura.' . . . He did get his fourth, but the ivory was disappointing. Then he went back to Tambura, and was met with news of a tragedy. Abdulla Effendi Fergusson had been eaten by a wild cat.

There were hundreds of things for him to be busy about, and he says, 'I never give myself the chance of sitting down and thinking; it makes one lonely.' But he wanted the rest of his world to be as energetic as himself . . . 'I do hate anyone who won't do a job of work. That's my great grouse against the natives here; they *won't* work unless they are driven to it; and their laziness is hard to cope with, for one has to go gently with them, otherwise we'd never

get anything done . . . When I left, my farmyard was down to about thirty hens, but I've told my Captain to send out four lumps of salt, and that ought to bring me in 100 chickens; so I hope to have enough eggs to keep me going when I get back . . . I found a present waiting for me—forty gramophone records from the Officers' Mess at Wau. Awfully good of them!

His application for service in Mesopotamia was thrown out, and at the same time he heard that he had passed his Arabic exam. and was fourth on the roll.

It occurred to him that it would be interesting to see how the people would react to such an experiment as having athletic sports at Tambura, and in July this new thing was attempted. 'My events were: cross-country race, three-legged race, wheelbarrow race, V.C. race, horse race (man carrying boy on his back), boat race (on land), 100 yds. race, spear throwing, bun race, archery, string and baton contest, women's 100 yds., boys' 100 yds., women's water carrying race, and a couple of girls' races. I thought this a pretty fair programme, and gave good prizes for everything. All the races caused huge excitement among the spectators; and some of them were really very funny. The competitors, however, couldn't understand why they didn't all get prizes, their argument being that they had all done the same amount of work *to amuse me*! They wouldn't for a moment admit that I had got the thing up to amuse *them*. The consequence was that, about half-way through the proceedings, all began to drift

away except those who were such good runners that they were practically sure of getting something. Anyone with brains could write quite an amusing account of the various incidents of the day. On the whole, it wasn't worth the money I spent on it, so they won't get another show . . . My scouts came back to-day, and reported good elephants four days' journey away from here, so I'm off on the 1st to see them. I also want to go after a couple of lions who have taken up their quarters on the main road. So far, they have killed six natives, and another came in yesterday with his leg half off . . . Our postmen are refusing to go with the letters on account of them, so at present we are to all intents and purposes cut off from the world lying beyond the lions, who seem to have caught the same disease the elephants had last year when they charged everyone they saw or smelt . . .

'Five and a half inches of rain in two hours last night, and to-day my lads are all busy repairing houses, fences and roads, and clearing drains. I've just had a lady up in office, charged with biting the ear off another lady. She bit the ear clean in half, and I can't imagine how she did it. At any rate she's in prison until I hear what she has to say to-morrow . . . The poor blighter whose leg was eaten by the lion died of blood-poisoning this morning . . . 1st August, '17. I left Tambura yesterday for another elephant hunt, but don't expect to have the luck I had last time, for the grass is simply impossible, being nearly everywhere about ten feet high; however, one never knows one's luck. I came across

three days old tracks early this morning, and was told the crops were being eaten here only a few days ago; so I might run into Jumbos any time now, as they don't keep to any particular spot in the rains . . . I have eleven of Fergusson's Scouts out with me this time, carrying my loads. They're dear little fellows, and I'd give anything for you to see them. . . . A very exciting day yesterday! At 3 p.m. I got news of ten elephants about two hours' walk from here, so started off at once, and, after trekking through very high grass, came on them suddenly. They must have either heard my carriers or got our scent, for they dashed off. I foolishly followed, and came slap into them in the long grass. They were standing absolutely motionless, waiting for us; and then they began to advance slowly towards us. Owing to the grass, I could see only one fellow, and just got a glimpse of his tusks, which were small, as far as I could judge. The blighter came for us, so I let off two rounds into his face, which stopped him. I heard the others tearing through the grass, so took to my heels and ran at right angles to their advance. They rushed straight past us, and then got scent of my carriers and went for them. The carriers of course fled, leaving my loads to the mercy of the elephants, with the result that nearly all my things have been smashed to pulp. One Jumbo put his foot on my only kettle, which is as flat as a pancake; my bath is minus a side; and my pots and pans have assumed various weird shapes not contemplated by the manufacturers. My roll of bedding made quite a good foothold for them, and was found some

distance away. A poor old cock I had in a basket had a marvellous escape. Naturally all my glass jars, cups, eggs, etc. are no more; but luckily they didn't, on the whole, do much damage. The poor boys were a bit scared, but soon recovered.

'I am moving on to-day, and hope to get into the forest country the day after to-morrow, where the grass is not thick and one can see a useful distance . . . For the last couple of days I have been escorted by a mad chief called Inziki—a most amusing card who kept us all in fits of laughter. His favourite dodge is to change his loin-cloth with anyone he meets on the road who seems to have a better one; and no one ever refuses him. He kept on relating all his grievances to me about his many wives who had run away with other men—accusing everyone from the Inspector downwards. At each village we came to, he yelled at the top of his voice: "Everyone turn out to see the Commandant, and bring all your chickens and eggs for him!" Needless to say, the people didn't always obey him; but in many cases they did, and I found myself followed up for miles by women and men carrying chickens and food for my carriers, which was rather annoying; so I have had to tell him to clear off, much to his disgust. I seem to be popular with lunatics. . . . After having had two wasted days, with not a sign of elephants, my whole following is now busy lighting a huge bonfire and making all sorts of weird noises to keep them off. They appeared at dusk, and I only hope they will hang about somewhere near until morning; but I don't want to be lifted out of bed by a pair of

tusks in the middle of the night . . . I started after them as soon as it was light, and had only a very short way to go before I came on several parties of them scattered about. Seeing a big bull all on his own, I picked him out, in preference to tackling a herd; and, after wading through a swamp, I downed him with one shot in the heart, which rather surprised me. What surprised me even more was that I killed him at once, which is unusual with a heart shot, after which they generally go a few yards before they drop. He was a very big old fellow, but I was rather taken in by his tusks, which aren't proportionately big. To put the tin hat on it, one of my soldier fools went and took two huge pieces out of one of the teeth when I wasn't looking. I am making him carry the things as well as his equipment, which will make him remember the incident for the good of his soul. All the local natives are frightfully bucked at the old Jumbo's death. They said they recognized him as the one who did all the damage to their crops . . . Only two more to get now; and I hope I may down another to-morrow. I have taken off the forefoot of this chap, and will keep it in case you might like it made into an umbrella-stand. It is a good big one, and ought to look well . . . No luck for some days . . . I bought a rather nice Azande throwing-knife to-day from an old man—a curio quite worth having, as there are very few of them left now. The people here are the most weird characters I have ever met; one simply can't rely on a single bit of information they bring in. Their minds are wholly given up to con-

sidering possible chances of making beasts of themselves on meat.

‘Yesterday I passed the very spot where I shot my elephant on the 10th, and there wasn’t so much as a bone left; in fact the only thing to mark it as a place of slaughter was the swarm of bees—millions—enjoying themselves on the smell . . . I walked into two beautiful waterbuck to-day. They were drinking at a stream only about seven yards off, and I stood quite half a minute before they spotted me. Of course I didn’t fire . . . I have just married two of my soldiers to dusky maids here; both the brides such nice little girls, about thirteen or fourteen years old, which is looked on as the proper age. They were very coy indeed; and, after obtaining my consent, they insisted on carrying out the customary form of homage by lying flat on the ground and cleaning the dirt from one’s feet—which always makes me feel rather awkward! . . . I was presented to-day with rather a quaint bell made out of a dom-palm nut and a bit of wood. It is generally tied round the necks of hunting dogs . . . After chasing Jumbo round in a circle for days quite fruitlessly, I’ve just had a runner to say I have to take over Major Larkin’s civil job at once; so I’m starting off back to Tambura to-morrow. Bad luck; but I cannot grumble. I’ve got six elephants now; and the largest number shot by anyone here before has been two, so I’ve beaten the District record all right; and before I leave Tambura in November I might with luck raise the number to eight . . . I don’t look forward much to the double work, except for the

£5 extra per month, which will go towards paying for the enormous amount of presents one has to hand out all over the place, to uphold the reputation of the "Red man from the North" . . . I find the beautiful big foot of the elephant I had cleaned for you with great trouble has gone bad. I gave it to a Chief to clean and dry in the sun, and the fool left it; so I've taken his toe nails off (I mean the elephant's!) as a poor sort of curio, and will be more careful when getting the foot of the next fellow cured . . . Arrived back yesterday, and am glad to get in again and have some fairly decent food. I found everything in good order and the mail waiting for me, so I've had a great evening reading your letters . . . Major Larkin leaves here to-morrow, and I've been very busy taking over his job from him. I'm taking over his cook too, I'm glad to say. My fellow has poisoned me three times already, so I'm feeding with Larkin till he goes. Veena (a civet cat—the latest pet) is going very strong. She has grown quite big, and looks so nice now.'

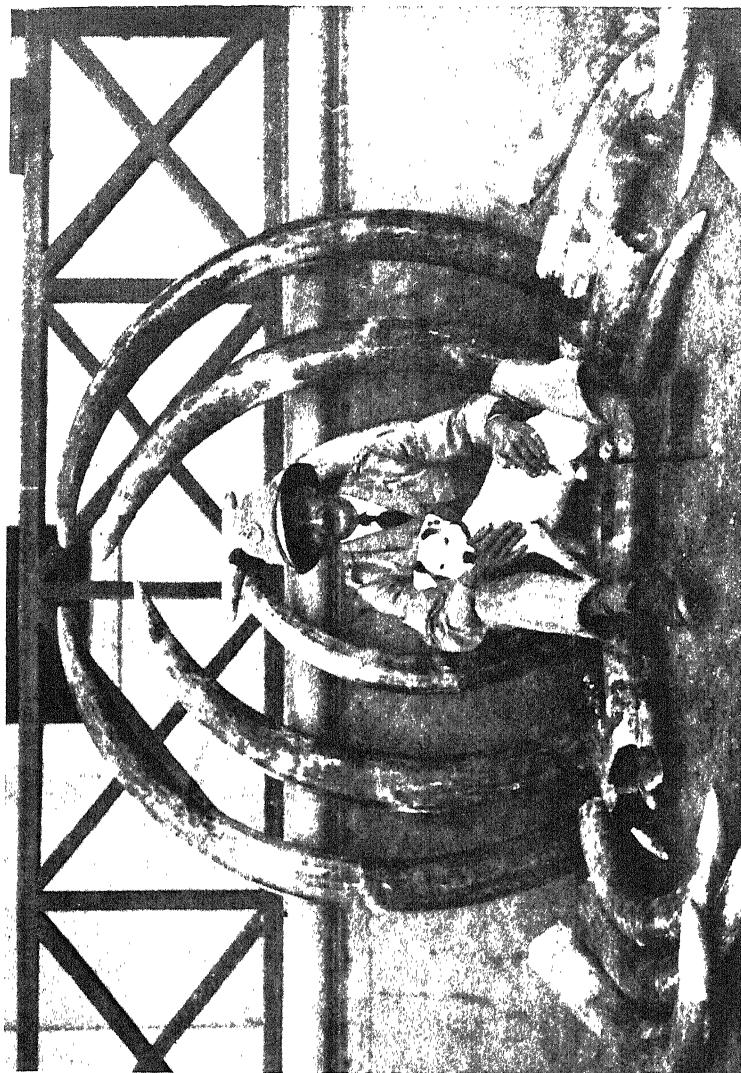
In September he was busy at musketry training again, and, having taken over the work of Major Larkin who was on leave, in addition to his own, his hands were full. His detachment was now up to strength, and he was daily turning away recruits. He had had only two deserters, which was encouraging, as he knew there had been twenty-four two years earlier. In October he went on tour for the detested job of hearing civil cases; but he had the compensation of two more elephants. 'I left Tambura on the 30th Sept., and so far have seen no

game, but I shot another Colobus monkey for Varuna yesterday. It has quite a good skin though the bullet did some damage. I'll be doing cases here all day, and if possible will trek off to Bazambago to-morrow, where I'll stop and try to get those two elephants due to me. Then I have to trek along the Congo frontier and see that they haven't pinched any of our land, so I expect to be away from Tambura just about a month. I have my mad man, Inziki, trekking about with me, and he keeps us all pretty lively. He comes to me almost daily with a case which I always decide against him. This seems to please him tremendously, and he goes off laughing like anything. I gave him one of your tin whistles yesterday, which delighted him; but he is continually blowing the thing when I'm in the middle of complicated cases on the marriage question . . . I have arrived at my headquarters at last, and hear the elephants have been doing a lot of damage to crops; so, with any luck, I'll be out after the blighters to-morrow morning. My string of followers is gradually increasing—all for cases; and I should say there must be close on two hundred here now—witnesses, and hangers-on who aren't witnesses, all in hopes an elephant may be shot. Yesterday my cases started at 7 a.m., and, after a short break for lunch, went on until after 7 p.m. . . . Very many thanks for the things you sent out. The rings especially caused great excitement. My native officers bagged all but two, and are frightfully bucked, so if you could send some more they would be welcome. The whistles too caused immense satis-

faction, because they are looked upon as a sort of thing used only by officers, so a native with a whistle hung round his neck thinks himself no end of a swell . . . I've just collected about thirty chickens on the road, and everyone has been most frightfully good, turning out with food, etc.; and in every village I came to I found eggs and chickens, and food for the carriers. also bananas, etc., all ready laid out, waiting for me. . . . I'm writing from Bafuka now. I got on to a large herd yesterday, but both the wind and the grass prevented me from getting at the principal members, and the tusks I did see weren't worth shooting. I saw one funny thing—a huge male without any tusks at all; probably they had been broken off . . . Just got news of a big tusker about eight hours from here, but I have a great deal of civil work to do and can't desert this spot for a few days, so I must hope he'll be there when I move on. I have written a line to Father, saying that I hope to be in Khartoum at the beginning of January and may be able to get out to see him. If the War Office won't let me join up in Mesopotamia or East Africa, I think I'll try to get a trip to India or Burma sooner than stay in Egypt; or possibly I might be able to fix up a shooting trip to Somaliland. . . . To-day I started after an immense herd, and with careful manœuvring I managed to break through the rear-guard without letting them get our scent, but got treed while scouting to see where the herd was going. I was well out of reach up the tree when an old female and child, with three young bulls and a fairy, came and

planted themselves at the foot of the tree.—I hadn't spotted them in the long grass.—They were there for a couple of minutes before noticing a belt I had left under the tree; then they smelt it, and were off like an express train, giving the alarm to the others; so I returned, knowing it would be useless to go on. It's a game of luck! . . . The elephants kept me awake most of the night, bellowing; and we had women and children shouting the whole night long to keep them off. I got up at 4 a.m., had a bite of food, and was after them as soon as it was light. By 6.30 I had the luck to run into a small bull with big ivory (about 60 lbs. each tusk), and brought him down. I feel sure he was the leader of the herd . . . This makes my seventh, and I now want only one more to complete my licence . . . I'll try to get his forefoot dried properly this time . . . I got my eighth elephant next day, after a frightful lot of bother and risk. I walked miles steadily from 7 a.m. till 6 p.m., and I'm dead to the world; but I must write and tell you about it. It was the most treacherous day for shooting that I've ever known, as there was a fairly strong breeze that didn't blow in the same direction for two minutes on end. The result was that I could not get through the outposts, and we were discovered no less than ten times.

'There were perhaps four good tuskers in the herd, which consisted of about thirty-five animals, with young. Three times I got up to splendid tuskers, and each time the infernal wind gave me away. Indeed it was not until 3 p.m., when a heavy downpour of rain put an end to the wind, that I was



able to get moving. We then had to run the gauntlet a couple of times, but I managed to lay out one bull with moderate ivory. The herd got frightfully excited, as they knew perfectly well they had been followed; and one bull that came to inspect us too closely had to be downed—worse luck! His friends picked him up and carried him off, but I expect we'll find him to-morrow, for he can't live long with a bullet in his heart. The ivory will, unfortunately, have to be handed over to Government, as I'm only allowed to shoot eight, and he'll make the ninth—when he is found. Now I don't suppose I'll have any more elephant news to bore you with for some time; at least not till August 1918, when I break out on a new licence . . . I forgot to tell you that my carriers found an extraordinary old iron bullet in the tummy of the last elephant I shot. Evidently some native had been blowing at the wretched brute some time ago with his old gaspipe of a gun. How they dare to fire a gun, which is just held together with string and nails, I don't know.

'The last fellow I saw fire that sort of gun at a hippo pulled the trigger three times without result. However, when it eventually did go off, things happened. . . . I had quite an exciting hunt after Colobus monkeys to-day. I killed three females to start with, and then went after a large male. He kept me on the go for an hour and a half, dodging behind trees, etc., and it was really marvellous to see how he took cover and watched me the whole time. In fact it was only by sending off a native to draw his attention in the opposite direction that I managed

to get him. That makes eleven skins towards Varuna's coat, and should be enough I think.' . . .

In November '17 he held a ceremonial parade in honour of the new Sultan, Fuad; and in the middle of the month, Bimbashi Hewitt arrived to take over Tambura from him. He hunted all the way down to Wau, and there is a gruesome entry in his diary for Nov. 25th: 'Passed to-day the skull of our Tambura postman who was killed by a buffalo.' . . . He was sorry to leave Tambura, 'for goodness only knows where I'll be landed after my leave . . . I bought an old horse yesterday which rolled up from the French Congo and has managed somehow to survive the Tsetse fly. I gave £7 10s. for him—rather a screw, but I don't look forward to the trek to Wau, and want something to ride. I did a nasty, long, waterless march to-day, and he saved me a good deal. I had no trouble with him, although we had to get over deep and swift flowing khors; and, when I am not riding, he follows me like a dog. The poor old thing has got only one eye.' (This must have brought to mind his first mount, Nelson, in the 8th Hussars.) 'I hear he lost the other when galloping down elephants in the Congo. He's a useful old brute to have. You have only got to get off and tell him to stand still, and he won't budge . . . We had a great day yesterday, passing through decent country teeming with game, and I shot three Jackson hartebeeste for the carriers; but they don't even give one a sporting run for one's money, because they are so inquisitive they simply walk straight up to one.' He could have shot them by the

dozen, but he made a point of never killing animals of that kind except for the carriers' necessary food . . . 'To-day I've shot a waterbuck for food; and saw a lovely Giant Eland, a most magnificent brute that I would have gone after had I not been in the middle of a rather beastly trek—seven hours without water, which is hard on the poor carriers. However they have tons of food, at least in the meat line, and I've just been giving them an entertainment on your gramophone to liven them up . . . Really I'm glad to have the old horse, for my boots are through at the toes, which doesn't make much difference except that small stones get in at times and annoy me. My helmet looks like nothing on earth, so I'll have to keep out of the way until I can make myself a bit more respectable. . . . A beastly trek to-day. We started off at 6 a.m., and arrived here, where there's just a pool of stagnant water, at 5 p.m. We met only one watering place on the way, as all the khors were dried up; so the poor old carriers had rather a bad time. Unfortunately I have to trek along as quickly as I can now, and try if possible to reach Wau the day after to-morrow.

I issued my last ration of flour to the men to-day, which means a good old trek to-morrow. If I could depend on game, it would be all right; but the grass here has not yet been burnt, and animals naturally don't inhabit dried up wastes of land . . . Another long trek to-day; but we're only two hours from Wau now, so we'll probably move in to-morrow afternoon, when we have had a wash in the river here and a brush up on the bank. The river is now

only about 120 yards wide, and the old horse swam over it in great style. I saw one or two small buck to-day on the road, but missed the only one I could get a shot at; however I got a little food for the carriers by shooting three dog-faced monkeys. I don't one bit look forward to getting back (Oh, damn! I'm getting simply eaten by mosquitoes in this infernal spot) to civilization again, and would far rather live by myself and get out of the awful drivel of etiquette . . . Met Capt. Colville of the Sudanese at Wau. He was in the D.C.L.I. at Gravesend when I was there . . . I shot some lovely feathers for Varuna the other day, dark blue with white background—really perfect. No one knows what they are, or has ever seen them before, and I'm certain they'll be the envy of everyone! Unfortunately one spray was stolen to-day by some blighter when I was out—probably my servant. I must try to get some more . . . My poor old horse has developed a sore back, and I shall have to leave him here. No one will buy him, as they're afraid he'll die of fly, so he was an expensive little luxury for the Tambura trip . . . I shot two roan antelope this morning after a crawl of about 200 yards on my tummy; we wanted them badly for meat . . . I ran across a huge black nambe snake to-day in the grass—a powerful looking brute with a nasty habit of spitting in one's face, which is most painful if it gets one in the eye, so I didn't tackle him, and he cleared off. I was assisted to cut up my meat to-day by a gang of Dinka natives. They're fine looking fellows, but neither sex wears a stitch of clothes . . .

Arrived at Meshra-el-Rek, and deuced glad I am to be at the end of my three hundred odd miles' trek at last; and I think the poor carriers are glad too, although goodness knows they've had enough to eat, as far as meat goes. Only one man sick (with a sprained knee) in the whole time. I'm exceptionally lucky with carriers. The trek to-day was beastly; either water or mud the whole way, and for the last mile or so it was up to my waist. Naturally we saw no game except a few snipe and duck, which refused to come anywhere near. There must have been six or eight leopards round the village I slept in last night; and all the dogs in the place were out barking, so I didn't get much sleep . . . I moved on to the steamer this afternoon, and simply revelled in a real bath and a decent mosquito-proof room. We push off some time to-morrow morning. . . . I'm feeling as strong as an elephant now, and enjoying my trip down the Nile more than I can say. I saw my first lion to-day, quite close to the steamer—a fine, great beast, looking every inch the King of the Forest . . . Arrived at Malakal to-day, and have to wait until the steamer for Khartoum calls in two or three days . . . To-morrow will be Christmas Day.'

Next morning he called on the Governor of the Upper Nile Province, Major Stigand. There was a dinner party of twelve that evening; and again next day he dined with the Governor—these two men together, both doomed to untimely death at the hands of the wild tribes among whom their work lay.

In January '18 he reached Cairo, and at the beginning of February joined his father, who was on the Palestine front, and was taken on Colonel Fergusson's Staff for six weeks; after which he returned to Cairo, where he met many people he knew, including an old Winton House boy, whom he visited in hospital, and a man who had been a major in the 8th Hussars when the little corporal got his commission.

At the end of March he was met by Major Larkin at Khartoum, and, leaving Omdurman early in April, he went to Mongalla, where he was ordered off at once to Uganda to work in conjunction with East African troops against the Turkhana and Abyssinian troops, and left on the 27th with twenty-four carriers, eleven soldiers, two servants and Vic—who was a donkey. On the way up he stopped at Malakal, and heard that Major Stigand, who had gone out to gather taxes, had not been heard of for several weeks. Like Vere himself, he was adventurous and never careful of his own safety.

Torit was reached at the beginning of May, after a trek of twenty-two miles, and he found there a large house ready for him to live in.

Various Creatures

*He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and beast and bird.*

SAMUEL COLERIDGE

AT Losso Post, Uganda, he found a Sergeant-Major and twelve men, and moved them to form a block-house to stop the Abyssinians from attacking friendly tribes. Apparently it would have been impossible to starve there, for a sheep cost only two shillings, a chicken twopence, and eggs were four a penny. Milk was a penny a quart, potatoes sixpence a sack, and you could get a cow for one pound. In view of such possibilities for economy, Vere thought he could afford to give four pounds for another donkey, so Vim was bought, doubtless making a welcome companion for Vic, who had cost five pounds ten and wanted to talk about it.

At Moritor Post he heard that operations had to be stopped owing to bad weather and shortage of food, so he amused himself by starting a savings-bank for his men and buying cows and calves for himself.

The calves were called Fug and Bug, and were allowed to run all over his house—he called it ‘playing mad horses.’ Two more donkeys, at six shillings each, were added to the family and called

Val and Vol. Naturally they were looked down upon by the more expensive Vic and Vim.

At the end of the month there was a successful skirmish, and a village was taken. Entries in his diary for June are amusingly concerned with animals: 'An addition to my farm—Archie, a goat, given to me yesterday by a Chief . . . Back to Moritor Post yesterday, and got a great reception from my three cows, who followed me round till I gave them salt . . . Found Willie, my wee Oribi baby, blown out like a balloon, having been overfed, and unable to stand up . . . Very funny sight on parade to-day: two infant ostriches walked on in front of the squad, and then began to waltz round and round . . . I'm furious. I left Willie with one of my officers for one day while I was away, and he tied him up with string, which has not only cut his legs but, I fear, paralysed him.'

A man went down with smallpox at Laruma, and a few days later his entry at Ukuti says: 'Arrived here to find the place stiff with smallpox. The man I left at Lokuma has disappeared, and, as he could not walk, I am afraid the natives have taken him away into the grass. I'm off to find and imprison the Chief. Water giving out. Pretty bad . . . Food very scarce, so we have come out after game. We have been treated to rain dances by the women, about two hundred of them performing, with weeds round their necks and feathers in their hair.' (Rain dancing in Africa is equivalent to praying for rain in Church in England.) 'After two hours' dancing *the rain did come*—the first we have had for ages . . .

The donkeys walked into my house and drank up all my bath water! . . . One of my officers wrote to me:

“TO HIS HONOUR BIMB. FERGUSON,

SIR,

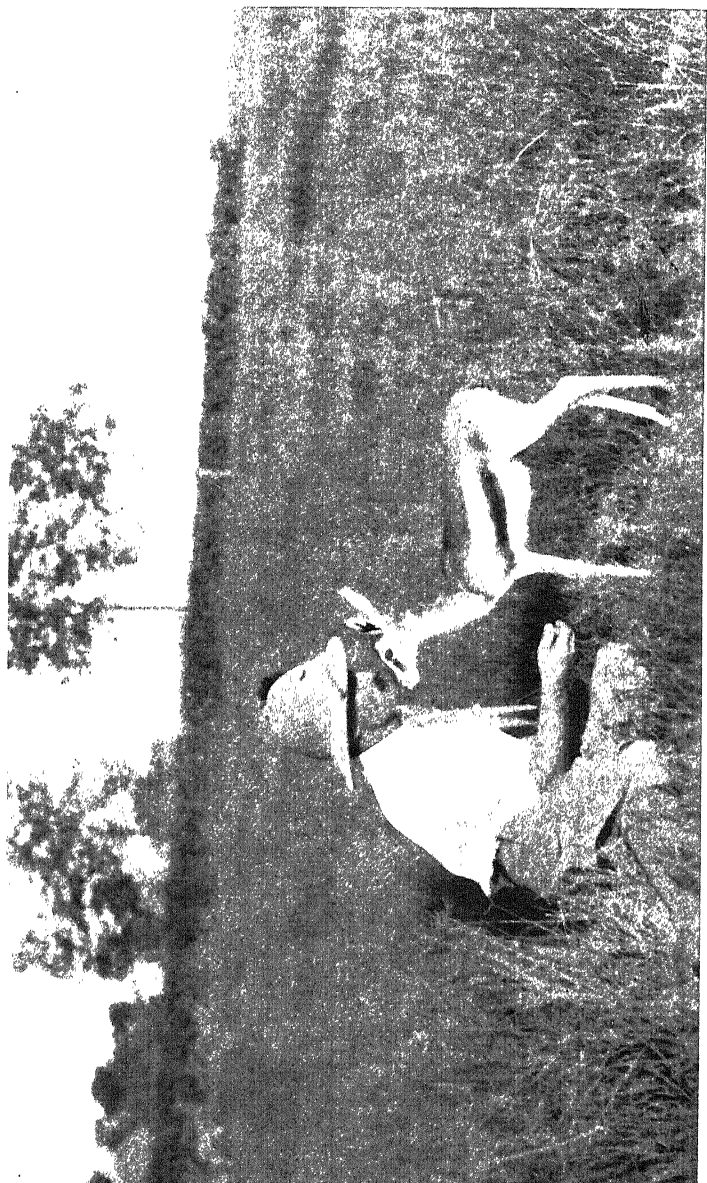
I sorry to tell that poor orfan carf dead yesterday from the same sick his mother sick from.”

‘Six more donkeys in to-day. I am turning them into a Company Transport Section . . . While at lunch, sudden heavy rain came down. I heard a stampede, and all my eighteen donkeys (and six ostriches with them) charged on to my verandah for shelter . . . One of my Posts was attacked last night, and the sentry shot a man not half a dozen yards off.’

At the beginning of July he sent off four hundred carriers to bring the troops home; and next day his victorious Patrol got back with only one loss. About the middle of the month he had a summons from Uganda, asking him to operate against the Nangiyia Mountains. ‘They are sending me reinforcements . . . I have had a letter from the Research Committee in Khartoum, saying they had heard of my exploits as a gardener and experimenter, and asking if I would start a model farm . . . They are sending me four sacks of seeds, including tobacco, coffee, rice, wheat, hemp, etc. . . . I had a nice letter from my late Governor, saying he was sorry I had decided not to join the Civil, but that he would take me any time I got fed up with the Military. . . .

‘I’ve been doing some surgery lately, and operated with a safety razor blade on a carrier’s foot, which had a huge abscess in it. Another man had an abscess in his side, on which I operated; and both men are at work again. Since then I have had four people asking me to cut them open for various reasons!’

In August he wrote: ‘Pushed off to Ikitos, withdrawing my Posts on the way. A queer looking lot we were, moving along with 150 donkeys, all carrying grain and boxes, 80 carriers, 103 soldiers, 15 cows, 15 sheep, 2 ostriches and 40 chickens. At Ikitos I had Courts of Enquiry and Boards on various things; and, after two days’ hard work, left for Torit. One day out from Ikitos, I got an urgent note, ordering me to go as fast as possible to Menge — a five days’ march—where the natives had rebelled, killed four policemen and captured our Post. I set off by moonlight, and got to Menge in two days, marching night and day, with only four hours’ sleep. My men, donkeys and cows were pretty well done. We attacked the hills at once, with excellent effect. I have now stopped strafing them, and released all prisoners after giving them tobacco and a good feed—the result being that the people are coming in to me now. I have got most of the mail back, and a fellow who surrendered has just gone off to bring in the rifles and kit they captured from the police. They are bringing in all their cattle and sheep to me as a peace-offering. These I shall probably give back. Judging by information I got out of them, I believe the whole trouble has been caused



by the police, who have been taking their women and robbing them. I must say I thoroughly sympathise with them, and shall do my best to get the police disbanded, unless a European officer can be put in charge of them . . . Poor Vic has got sleeping sickness now, so I can't ride her, but she follows me about like a dog.'

A bad time among the animals followed, many of them, who were personal friends, getting sleeping sickness and having to be shot. Vic, the best of the donkeys, went; and by the time Mongalla was reached all the cattle were dead.

In September every British officer there, except himself, was on the sick list; and there was more trouble among the tribes. In October he entertained the doctor, whose servants were all in hospital; and more C.S.M.* had broken out. Meanwhile he had taken the Governor's advice and applied for transfer to the Civil. In November he had news of mutiny in one of his detachments, and went to Logbogwe to put the fear of God into them . . . 'Here I am, bang in the middle of elephant country, and it's good to be in my old haunts again. I came on four bulls, and got a shot at the best of them from 35 yards. . . . I have Dorothy with me now. I brought her out to eat, but I can't kill her, she is so affectionate.' (An apparently sensational entry, with a suggestion of scandal; but Dorothy was a sheep.)

'Got news of Elephant at 7 a.m., so started, and walked hard till 2 p.m., when I came on a small herd

* Cerebro-spinal-meningitis.

of three males and seven females resting under a tree. Two of the males had got tusks; so I chose the biggest, and crept up to within fifteen yards of him and let fly. Of course they all bolted, but the one I hit went in a different direction from the others. I ran after him for about a mile, then came on him sitting down, and was just going to plug him again when down came the others. I went up the nearest tree like a grasshopper, and had a good view. They stopped when they came up to him, and sniffed round him as if they might be arranging to carry him off, so I let fly again and killed him . . . I was frightfully uncomfortable up that tree, just sort of hanging on by an eyelid and a small toe, and the shock of the rifle nearly dislodged me. . . . I must leave him in the grass to-night and send for the tusks to-morrow. They are about 8 ft. long and about 35 lbs. each.'

In December, at Mongalla, he had a wire in answer to his application to go to the Civil, asking him to take over the work of a Civil official who was ill; and this would have brought him to Tambura again; but it could not be arranged, as his C.O. wanted to keep him at least until after the Patrol for which preparations were then being made. The month passed in training scouts for the coming Patrol, and hunting; and Christmas Day was celebrated by dining with the Governor and giving his men a present of two bulls and 1 lb. of sugar each.

At the end of the Patrol of January 1919: 'After interrogating the prisoners we let them go, with a good supply of goats, and sent messages to the

Chiefs to come and see us. They came in yesterday and made themselves very pleasant, saying they were quite prepared to obey the Government; so we have given them back all their cattle and goats, except the few we have to keep for fresh milk and meat. In the afternoon Brock and I walked out to see them in their villages, and got quite a good reception. They were living in a filthy place, but the people are fine-looking, and seem clean, and are great fighting men. They told us they had never seen a white man before, but had heard a lot about how we always kept our word, and that was why they had come in at once when ordered. They gave a feather head-dress to Brock and a small leopard skin to me. . . . We move off in a couple of days into the Taposa country, which we are to penetrate peacefully. The country has never been entered before, and the attitude of the people is uncertain. . . . Entering the Taposa country, we came to some wells where people were watering their cattle. Seeing such a crowd of soldiers coming, they bolted; but, after a bit, finding we meant no harm, they came back and had a chat.

‘They are very fine-looking men, with most curious head-dresses and weird-looking spears. They seemed most independent, and very suspicious, as no white man had been in their country before. They said they had heard of the Government, and would obey us so long as we did not interfere with their ordinary routine, which apparently is to squat down and do nothing—except when now and then they attack local tribes and carry off women and

cattle. I fancy they will be a difficult lot to manage when they find they will have to pay taxes and carry loads.'

An outbreak of C.S.M. and smallpox checked further progress, and early in March he was back in Mongalla, where he renewed his acquaintance with Major Stigand. His men were quarantined in the bush, and he bicycled out to see them every morning. Orders came to raise a new detachment of 160 men, just as he expected home leave. However, it was absolutely necessary for him to go to Khartoum and interview a dentist. The climate was extremely hard on teeth, and his had been too long neglected, with most painful consequences. While in Khartoum he heard much that was illuminating as to the state of Egypt. The country was suffering from lack of any definite administrative scheme, and the consequences were highly disturbing. Eight British officers, going from Cairo to Shellal, were dragged out of the train and most brutally murdered by a furious mob; after which the railway between Khartoum and Cairo was for a time open only for food traffic, all passengers going round by Port Sudan, and boat to Cairo. Ten Egyptians officers were sent up from Port Sudan for trial on charge of trying to incite to mutiny in the Army, and in their kits were found copies of an Egyptian song cursing the English in general and the Sirdar in particular. The value of metrical cursing was no new discovery, and some highly respectable people could have told them a lot about it. . . . He got back to Mongalla at the end of May, and temporarily beat his sword into a ploughshare. In

June the Governor made another application for his services on the Civil side, and got no reply from the War Office.

He was hunting elephants again at the end of June. . . . 'I got on to the herd at about 2.30, and found them just moving off from a khor where they had been watering. The country was thick, so that I could see only a few of the animals to start with, but they gradually worked into an open plain where I had a good view of them all. There were only two bulls who had tusks of any size, and I followed them up, but could not get a shot at the big fellow, who was always surrounded by the ladies. I felt funny—following up such a large herd across an absolutely open place and being not more than fifty yards behind them. It was almost as if I were driving cattle, until an old female left the herd, and, in doing so, got behind us and scented our tracks. She gave one squeal, and charged down the way we had just come; but fortunately she went in the wrong direction. The herd stopped for a minute, and two females with calves spotted us, but evidently were not certain what we were, as they did not get our scent. They charged straight for us, but we bolted like blazes; and luckily they came only about forty yards, then turning back to join the herd.

'We got up to them again; but, as it was now 5.30 p.m. and the light gradually failing, I had to give up all idea of getting the big fellow, so took the smaller one of the two, who gave me a nice easy shot at about twenty-five yards. I got him through the heart, and the tusks are just over six feet long. . . .

This morning we trekked off to see the brute cut up, and—what a sight!—What a fight! It's always the same: everyone wallowing in blood and entrails, fighting for bits of meat, and all struggling to be first to get into the tummy when an opening is made, to secure the tit-bits. A revolting spectacle, but, as I say, always the same, everywhere, when the native throws off the human cloak and turns into a pariah of the worst type, alternately laughing at his own satisfaction and cursing when he finds that another fellow has crawled up and pinched the bit of liver or sweetbread of which he has been dreaming ever since the news of the death reached him. I wish I'd had a camera. . . . To-morrow I'm going to move on to Logbogwe, the next village, about three hours away; and, if all goes well, I should leave Mongalla on the 3rd of August for home; but passages both by train and boat are hard to get.'

Late in July, he was packed up and ready to start when a wire came saying he was urgently needed for the Civil, and asking if he were willing to forgo leave for the present. He wired consent, and received immediate orders to go to Rumbek as Civil Inspector without delay. He knew that all non-regular officers were being sent out and replaced by regulars, and that, if he did not take his chance at once when offered, he might lose many places in seniority; so there seemed but one sensible decision at which to arrive.

A few words may be said here concerning the Service which he was entering. The Sudan—about the same area as British India—is divided into twelve



CUTTING UP AN ELEPHANT



CARRIERS' FOOD

Provinces, the Headquarters of its Government being at Khartoum, where the Governor-General has his Council. Each Province is in charge of a Governor with a staff of District Commissioners, who administer the various Districts into which the Province is divided.

Vere went to the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province (which has an area of 120,000 square miles—about the size of France and Belgium combined), when it was governed by Lord Hawarden, who sent him to Rumbek, where his work lay among the Dinkas. It was after Major Wheatley had succeeded Lord Hawarden as Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal that Vere took over the Nuer District, with an area of 10,000 square miles and a population of about 150,000.

The Nuer Country lies on the west of the Bahr-el-Jebel or main stream of the White Nile, to the south of the Nuba Mountain Province as far west as Ghabat-el-Arab on the Bahr-el-Ghazal River and the Nuer-Dinka boundary running from Ghabat-el-Arab south towards Rumbek, and then east to near Shambe on the Nile.

The policy of government was that of indirect native administration. Chiefs were held responsible for their clans, and held courts for settlement of all purely tribal matters. These courts passed judgment in accordance with tribal law, provided that such law did not violate civilized and humane customs.

In addition to these Tribal Chiefs, there were Over-Chiefs, who were in charge of a number of clans of one tribe, or of a specified area; and these,

in addition to their duties as Area Chiefs, acted as the medium through which Government orders were communicated to the smaller Chiefs.

In every case, Chiefs and individual members of tribes had direct access to the District Commissioner, if they had any grievance; and, furthermore, they might appeal from the District Commissioner to the Governor of a Province.

As to the D.C.'s responsibility for his District, he had, in actual fact, complete discretion regarding detail, provided that he followed the main policy laid down and directed by the Governor. There was a police force at the disposal of the D.C.; but, as far as possible, this force was kept in the background, and Chiefs were encouraged to rely on their own tribal police.

Vere seldom used police escort, nor could it have been of any practical use in real danger. Immunity from harm among savages depends on the prestige of the White Man, the Government, and the Individual.

In Vere's District there was an Agricultural Inspector, whose work lay in that District alone; and there was also a Medical Officer, who visited it from time to time. Both these officials worked in close association with the D.C.

Before Vere took them over, the Nuers had been under no control—except the merely symbolic one of a few police posts along the dividing line between them and the Dinkas, whom they raided habitually; they had seen hardly any white men except a party of Irrigation Engineers passing through their

country; and their only contact with the outside world was afforded by occasional Arab traders, who, in their anxiety to exploit the natives unchecked, did all they could to make the Nuers fear and hate the idea of Government control.

Up to this time, the Government had been reluctant to ask any official to undertake the hardship and risk that would be unavoidable in attempting to penetrate the Nuer Country and 'bring in' these wildest tribes; but, when a man came along who actually *wanted* to do it—well, the chance was not one to be neglected.

Awaraquay

*Take up the White Man's burden
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple
An hundred times made plain . . .*

RUDYARD KIPLING

'HERE I am, on Aug. 15th, in my District, and on my way to Rumbek. Progress is slow, as I decided to trek through parts hitherto unvisited; and the result is that people run for their lives on our approach, and carriers are the devil to get hold of. The Chiefs seem to have authority over them, and the problem is a stiff one.

'At the present moment I have three Chiefs under arrest for not getting carriers, and my rate of going is about two hours' march a day—from one village to another. The country is beautiful, mostly tropical forest, but we have been crossing a huge tableland, and haven't seen a single head of game. Lau is one of the four sub-district Headquarters, with a black Sub-Inspector in charge. . . . I have had a lot of complaints about his giving unjust decisions, but all these fellows are the same, which rather ties one's hands. This is an enormous District; I don't yet know how many square miles; but too big to look after properly. . . . My entry into this place was

extraordinary. I was greeted by a gathering of Mohammedan merchants, who rushed on me as though I were a long-lost brother, and assured me they had looked forward to this day since the beginning of time, and had been praying that Allah would send me quickly. I don't for a moment believe that they knew I was coming; and, if they had known, I'm certain they'd have hidden themselves away until I had gone. However, they sent me round some very good coffee—presumably a sop. . . . I told my servant to-day to wash everything, and I've just caught him wringing out one of my pillows—feathers and all! Luckily it was the only one of the lot he had attacked. . . . The first duty I had on arrival at Rumbek was to hear a list of fifteen complaints against the alleged injustice of my predecessor and the Sub-Inspector. The complaints were made by four merchants, and, after four days' sitting, I turned them all out of the Province; so they didn't get much change out of me. . . . This part of Africa is lovely in spots, but it is seldom one feels inclined to enjoy the sights, because the climate is so much the opposite. My law of averages always works out; and, wherever one goes, one finds something to counteract the advantages. In fact, I rather distrust having too good a time, because something is sure to get into the other side of the balance; and, on the other hand, when something bad turns up, one says, "Never mind! There's sure to be a compensating good on the way." . . . I arrested three Chiefs yesterday for not clearing roads after I had given the order for them to set their people to work.

‘This evening I went to look at the road, and found the place full of men, women and children, working like bees in a hive. The only way to treat a native is to be strict from the start, and not to pass over the least mistake or negligence. One’s expectations soon become known, and one has no more trouble. I have got a D.C.L.I. major and another man coming through on their way to Khartoum. They don’t generally come this way, but two steamers have got blocked up in the Sud and can’t get out; and, as far as I know, they have no food. The same thing happened in 1915, when about forty people died of starvation. It is impossible to get help to them in time. They simply have to sit on the boat and starve. There’s no land for them to get on to, and the boat is absolutely clogged up in the awful mass of floating reeds. . . . I left Rumbek on the 16th Sept., to inspect the re-cleaning of roads and bridges, and to visit some Chiefs. . . . I start hearing cases at 9 a.m. and go on till 6 p.m., with half an hour’s break for lunch. I’ve got through two hundred cases in the last ten days.

‘There is no variety, as they are nearly all “cow cases”—thefts, and marriage dowries—most puzzling, as all the cows have names, and one has to make a sort of family tree of both the cows and the people concerned with them before one can get the hang of things.

‘I have been trekking from village to village, stopping for two or three days at each, and am now on my way back. I have a following of a couple of hundred people, Chiefs, etc., all wanting cases heard.

It's rather jolly, as they appreciate one's work, which is the great thing. I have been presented with six bulls, including one called Marial, a big white bull with a black face, which is treated by the natives as a sort of charm. The bull was known to the tribe Agar as Awaraquay, and now the people have given me the same name. I have quite a collection of names, given to me at the various places I've visited. I am kept well supplied with milk, sheep and chickens, and I get vegetables sent out from Rumbek. . . . I have been stuck here at Lau Post for the last seven days, just getting over what must have been Spanish 'flu, so I'm feeling a bit of a worm. All my carriers are down with it; and to-day my servants and a small girl, whose leg I have been doctoring, went down in a party. The poor child's leg is much better and healing, so that I expect to be able to save it. . . . I had intended going to Shambe to meet the Governor, but have just got a runner in, saying my Sub-Inspector at Rumbek and nearly all the police, as well as some prisoners, are down with 'flu, so I must trek back again as soon as I can. I was presented with three bulls and twelve goats by the Chiefs yesterday, but they will all have to be sold. I really can't cope with it! . . . This is the 28th of October, and to-day I heard what was my thousandth case in one month—some work! . . . I've had an envelope addressed to me: "Sir Vermont Fergusson, Bart, J.P., High Commissioner, Rumbek." Nothing like piling it on!

When he got back to Rumbek in November, while preparations were being made to receive the

Governor, Lord Hawarden, there was a terrible outbreak of disease among the cattle and horses. The local merchants, who had sixty donkeys, lost them all within a month; and half the Government cows died. To add to the general discomfort, a plot had been discovered to murder one of the Sub-Inspectors in an out-district; and it seemed that things all round were quite bad enough to warrant an expectation of some compensating good.

‘I got the small girl back here all right, but quite thought she would have died on the road. The doctor had a look at her, and says she has got heart disease and malaria, and will never be any good. I sent her into hospital, and went to see her this evening. She was frightfully aggrieved because I gave her only soup to drink and would not allow her to come to my house. . . . I have been talking to the Lau missionary, who has been here for ten years, with nothing to show for it in the way of converts because he won’t recognise native customs in the matter of wives, and tries to forbid native dances. If these good men would only stick to essentials!—I’ll never subscribe to foreign missions again. . . . I have quite a good lot of native officers here, and the one who is a sort of Chief-of-Staff is a first-class fellow who works like a brick. It’s the others in out-stations that cause all the trouble. They have no idea how to treat natives properly, and, if not under a white man’s eye, do all sorts of reprehensible things. One of them and seven police, got killed by the people a week ago. I’m off to-morrow to see what it’s all about. . . . A report has just come in

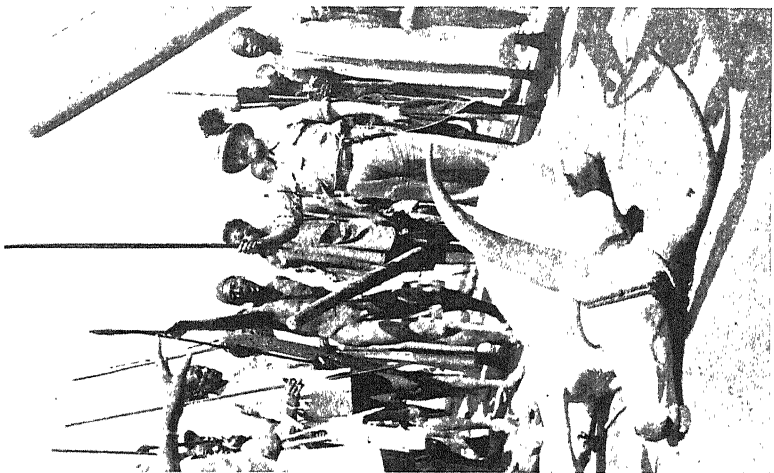
that a merchant has been speared. (Most of those merchants deserve all they get.) There's a war on in the next District to mine, and they've cut all the telegraph lines, so I'm not bothered by telegrams. . . . I expect to spend Christmas Day on trek. . . . I left Rumbek on the 28th Nov., and have been doing police work the whole time, roping in illicit arms and ammunition which these infernal merchants smuggle into the District and sell to the natives—old guns, not worth more than a few shillings, for £30 and even more. They have been known to charge £2 10s. for a small handful of gunpowder—the devils! . . . I've been getting in taxes, too, which are paid in cattle and grain—not a very popular pastime. They all try to bluff as to their poverty. There was a famine last year, owing to the failure of the crops, and hundreds died in consequence; but this year crops are splendid. . . . Before coming here to Gnopp, I was at a perfectly lovely spot called Bahr-el-Naam. It is on a big river, and there are great rocks and rapids—a beautiful sight. I stayed there one night, and then went on to Chief Doggadü.

'Gnopp is the Headquarters of one of my sub-districts, and I have a black Sub-Inspector here, as well as a clerk and postmaster. I got a tremendous reception. About six miles from the place I was met by two hundred warriors in their war paint, who sang songs and danced in front of my bicycle until I reached Gnopp, where I was met by a mob of howling people—well over 1500; and for the last couple of days I haven't had much peace, with people following me, singing, all over the place. It has cost

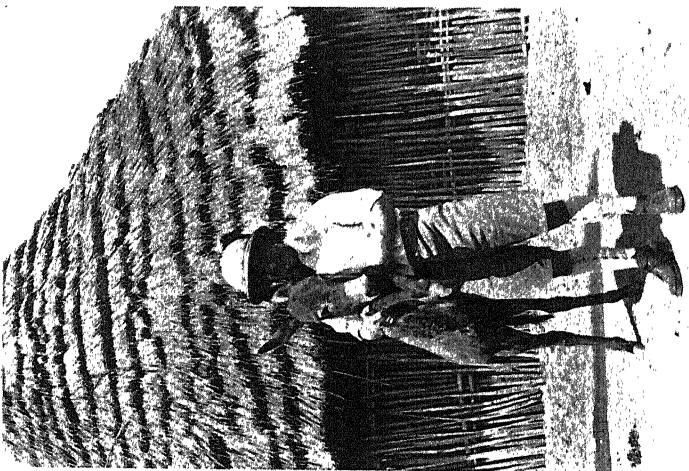
me a pretty penny too—£30 in these two days for tobacco, clothes, bulls to be killed, etc. . . . There was great excitement killing the bulls with spears according to native custom. First the people dance round the bulls, all the warriors, with their spears, singing, "What a good Government it is!" etc., etc. Then, at a given signal, there is a loud "Whoop!" and they spear the animals at once. Their aim is extraordinary, and every bull is speared in the heart at the first attempt.'—This, it may be remarked in passing, appears to be a happier dispatch than that accorded to animals in European slaughter-houses. 'There was a huge scramble then for the meat, and dances have been going on all day and night. . . . To run blacks, one has more or less to keep to their own laws and customs. They are far more tied down by etiquette than Europeans are, and ignoring this starts trouble. Hearing cases, for instance, new fellows from home laugh at the petty complaints put forward and will do nothing, little realising that it is only by giving consideration to the minutest details of such complaints one can win the confidence of the wild men.'

The troubles presently to be alluded to in the diary were caused at the outset by the overbearing conduct of a native official, who, not having the eye of a white man over him, took advantage of insect authority after the manner of his kind. The Aliab Dinkas, over whom he had imagined himself to be reigning, very naturally resented his conduct, attacked the Government Post—near Tombe—where he was, and drove him and the police out of it in no

THE WHITE HORSE



THE WHITE HORSE



gentle manner. Breaches of discipline could not be overlooked, and Major Stigand, O.B.E., Governor of Mongalla Province, accompanied, as Political Officer, a punitive expedition commanded by Major White (Equatorial Corps). The force was ambushed and both Major Stigand and Major White were killed on the 8th of December, 1919. It should be understood that, in this case, the officers were not murdered, but were killed in the course of fighting. Still, those who killed them were rebels against authority, and a punitive expedition to avenge their deaths was an absolute necessity. This expedition, known as the Aliab Patrol, was commanded by Major Darwall, R.M.L.I., with Major Brock as Chief Political Officer. Vere Fergusson, being District Commissioner of the adjoining District of the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province, was appointed Political Officer of the Lau Column, operating from that direction.

The Tombe Column (Major Darwall's) left its base, Tombe, on the 11th March, 1920, the Lau Column co-operating; and it was for his good work with his own—practically independent—Column that Vere was given his O.B.E.

The active operations of the Patrol ceased on the 10th of May, 1920.

The Aliab Patrol

*What, after toil, but rest is man's desire,
As sleep shall follow waking, and ashes follow fire?*

CLAUDE PENROSE

VERE began his diary-letter for 1920 with the entry: 'Jan. 1st. *Gnopp*. There has been great fighting over in Mongalla Province, about thirty miles from here, where twenty of my old Equatorial soldiers were killed and many wounded, having been attacked by Dinka spearmen at night, and killed before they had time to get out of bed. One of my Chiefs, too, has risen up. I sent a Patrol out on the 29th Dec. under my old Mamur, with twenty-one police and fifty local spearmen. They took 400 cattle, but got heavily attacked at night, and had two killed and seven wounded. We've got the Camel Corps, Mounted Infantry, machine guns, etc., coming down. They should arrive this month, and then we'll have a big combined strafe. My job at present is making maps, and sending out scouts for all possible information. Goodness knows how long I shall be stuck here. . . . I have had great fun with my captured cattle. I started giving them salt when they came in. For the first two days they sniffed at it distrustfully because they didn't know what it was, but now—! Well, at 5.30 a.m. I had three bulls

waiting outside my house for their lick of salt; and eventually they came right in. When I went down to see the other cattle, which are only a hundred yards away, they broke loose by the score, made a dash to follow me back, and then all gathered round my house. . . . The grave is here of Bimbashi Lawton, who was with me when I was at Lau. He was killed here in 1918, during the last rising. . . . I have been asked by the Civil Secretary to act as Political Officer to this big Patrol that's coming on here. I have accepted of course, but I don't know how I am going to get through the work. . . . I am "at it" the whole day up to 11 p.m., writing reports, getting in information, decoding telegrams and passing them on. I shall be glad to get a bit of leave when it is all over.

'I had a wire from the Governor to-day to say he had wired to Khartoum to have a relief ready for me as soon as the Patrol is over, which ought to be in the beginning of May. All depends on what these devils are going to do. You never know. We may have the whole place up in arms, but I don't think it's likely, as we are getting guns and aeroplanes. . . . This will be my seventh Patrol out here. I seem to come in for everything. However, it makes a change in one's work. . . .

'Here comes a sackful of telegrams. One would think this was the General Post Office, to see the special messengers flying about; and, on top of it all, the people want their cases attended to. . . . A month later: still squatting down, waiting for troops. I have been trying to knock sense into the people's

heads to make them come in. As a leg-pull, they sent me a deputation with twenty head of cattle, saying that they wanted to obey Government. You never saw such a collection of cattle! No less than six of them were totally blind from old age; none of them had an ounce of flesh on, and four were diseased. I just laughed when I saw them, and the deputation looked pretty sick about it. I thanked them for their trouble in coming in, but told them I could not possibly keep such old crocks to eat up all my valuable grass. I made them take the poor animals back, and said I would listen to terms when they brought in eight hundred good cows. Of course they won't; so that's that. . . . They are first class fighters, which is more than most black tribes are. They never attack in the daytime, except in long grass, but creep about at night and suddenly rush you without warning. They paint all sorts of weird designs on their bodies with ashes, and are certainly enough to frighten any one into fits. . . . My two bulls are doing splendidly. I sit on their backs, and can do anything with them. Their tameness is quite extraordinary, and the natives are tremendously pleased. We are busy now building hospitals and sheds for troops. I'm very comfortable here, with plenty of milk; and, after having been six weeks without bread, I have got a supply of flour from Khartoum. . . . Here I am, on the 21st, at Fantite, on my way back from a war conference at Amadi, in the Mongalla District. The result of the conference is that we are to start combined operations on the 4th of March; and, if the trouble is

over by the end of May, I'll start for home in June.

'My visit to Amadi was an awful rush, averaging twenty miles a day, and my soldiers and carriers are about done. It isn't so bad for me on my bicycle, although I seem to spend most of my time mending punctures on a road strewn with thorns. My police caught a little "dikdik" deer, two days old, and I've called her Sausage. She's in great form, and drinks her milk out of a saucer without any trouble. . . .

'When I was at Amadi, a big Handley Page came down on its way from Khartoum to the Cape. The pilot had evidently lost his way, and came down to find out where he was. . . . The force operating from our side is 500 rifles and some machine guns; and from Mongalla 800 rifles and ten machine guns. The natives are boasting of Major Stigand's murder, to show their contempt for the Government; and they dug up and exposed the bodies of the dead after the last fight. They have been attacking Tombe daily for the last week, but have not been able to do any damage; and a runner came yesterday to say they had made another raid on Gnopp. . . . I returned there on the 22nd, and all my carriers bolted next night, so now I must try to get them in again.

'Sausage is in great form, and very tame. . . . On the war-path again, March 10th. . . . We had a great send-off from Gnopp. The people were brushing my sides down, putting dust on my boots, making circles round me on the ground, and playing all sorts of antics. . . . A week later: just back from a strafe, out with the Mounted Infantry on the 15th.

We surprised a party of the enemy at dawn on the 16th, and captured 300 cattle. . . . We're awfully dirty. We were going hard the whole time till we got back at 6 p.m., and must have covered forty miles. . . . My two dogs, Buzz-Off and Wash-Out (twins that we captured) are doing splendidly, and amuse themselves destroying everything within their reach. They have been very successful with the mosquito-net; however, my cook is patching it up with bits of old blanket. . . . I don't know how my shorts are going to last until I get back to Rumbek. . . . It's May now, and I am just off out into the blue again to visit some more Posts. I don't expect to be back for fourteen days. We've been trekking round all over the country, getting soaked to the skin, but our Column has done well; and, since the show began, we have captured over 4000 cattle, killed about 300 of the enemy and destroyed numerous villages—a good deal more to show for our money than the main Column. If we don't finish in a fortnight, we'll never get over the rivers, which are rising daily. . . . I expect to leave for Khartoum on the 21st June, and be at home before the end of July.'

Four of them from the Sudan—Brothers of the Bog—went by the same boat to spend four months of well-earned leave in England. They must have ached for it; and, in looking back now, there is a certain comfort in remembering those happy leaves, passed in the clean, simple delight of a school-boy's holidays, in which energy was renewed for the work still to come. One can say, he was with such and

such people; he had such and such things that he loved; and nothing that happened afterwards had power to do away with joys held in the secure grasp of the past. They were his, and became part of the sum of happiness of which he could not be deprived. He wanted rest, and he had it under the best possible conditions, upon every remembrance of which he could thank God.

Back at Khartoum in December '20, he was immediately asked to return to the Equatorial Battalion and take command of it; but he had found his work, and decided on remaining with the Political. From the S.G.S. *Omdurman*, he wrote: 'Glad to get on board again! My dinner at the Palace was very pleasant, and Sir Lee and Lady Stack very kind. I was given the place of honour, next the Sirdar, and we had a great talk. He was awfully pleased about our last Patrol,' (the punitive expedition against the Aliab Dinkas, for which Vere got his O.B.E.) and drew me out as to my views on the re-organization of administration in the Sudan. It seems that my work on the Patrol has made a greater impression on the Powers than I thought; and I've spent most of my time going from one Head of Department to another, giving presents of my views on certain subjects. . . . As far as I can make out, if the Patrol had not been a success, some awkward questions would have been asked in the House, and several people would have lost their jobs. It very nearly was a failure until our Column moved out to take things on their own shoulders against orders; so there we are, through a mere stroke of luck, become "the

talk of the town"! (Was it 'a mere stroke of luck' when Nelson on a memorable occasion used his blind eye?) 'Getting away from Khartoum was an awful rush. They sent an old cart with one wheel nearly off it for my kit. Before it had gone two hundred yards both wheels were smashed and my kit in the road. By the way, when I arrived at Khartoum and apologized to the Civil Secretary for being late off leave, he said, "Good Gracious! We never expected you back until February. What made you come so soon?" . . . I sent a sample of my patent tin discs to the Sirdar's Private Secretary, with the result that they have been ordered for general use in the Sudan. . . . I am amusing myself making out schemes for the re-organization of the Province, which I have been asked to send in to be compared with others that are being compiled. . . . We hope to get to Shambe to-morrow. . . . Left on the 20th with one bull-cart and thirty-five carriers, and trekked another twelve miles next day. . . . It was moonlight when I started, but by 2 a.m. it was pitch dark and almost impossible to see. I happened to be riding my bicycle a few yards in front of the horse and mule which were being ridden by two boys, when they shrieked out that they were being attacked by leopards. I made out by the light of my lamp about ten hyaenas close on the heels of the mule, and I ran my bike at them to frighten them off; but apparently the light dazzled them, for they just stopped and looked at it. I fired a couple of shots at them and they disappeared into the grass on the side of the road; so we went on, thinking we had

got rid of them. We hadn't gone fifty yards when they made a regular charge from behind, and one landed on the horse's back. The horse and mule of course bolted, throwing the boys somewhere short of the next Province, and I opened fire again; but one can't see far with an oil lamp, and I had to fire ten shots before they finally cleared off. That gives an idea how daring the brutes are at night. The horse and mule were found about a mile further on, waiting for us. . . . At 4 a.m. we passed through a village which turned out and danced—fancy, at that hour! The people then insisted on escorting us to the next Rest House, which we reached at 7 a.m. Here we found about ninety people waiting for us. They started singing and dancing at once, and the row is still going on. I have just given them some old clothes. They're frightfully pleased with them, and they have dressed themselves up into most comical sights. If right side foremost puzzles them, back to front does as well. . . . We are off again this evening for another eight miles. That will make twenty-eight miles in twenty-four hours, an awful trek, but it has to be done on account of having no water. . . . Reached Lau Post here at 4 p.m. and got a great reception. We have been given such a large supply of goats, eggs, vegetables and fruit that I don't know what to do with it all. The return presents of clothes, etc., are about double the value of the stuff, so it comes rather expensive. . . .

'*Nyjong*. * Christmas Day: I arrived here at 6 a.m., having started at 11 p.m. last night by the full

* Majong on the map.

moon. . . . I had a great reception from the people here, who have been dancing all day long. I gave them masks, which have caused such huge delight that I think they'll sleep in them. . . . I have heard that I can go to Meridi, Gambio, Wau, or Rumbek, owing to the trouble which I predicted. The Dinkas have begged that I might return here. . . . We have great dancing and sham fights by way of exercise, and the fights are most exciting. We get up a force of about twenty, armed with spears with rubber heads, and attack another party armed in the same way. It is interesting to watch their tactics, and I am becoming quite an expert with a spear. Mann comes back on the 31st, just in time to celebrate the New Year.'

The Nuer Country

Then I entered on my find.

Then I ran my first rough survey . . .

Week by week my findings grew.

David went to look for donkeys; and by God he found a kingdom!

But by God, who sent His Whisper, I had struck the worth of two!

* * * * *

Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.

But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

RUDYARD KIPLING

It was with the year 1921 that Vere Fergusson's work among the Nuers—in fact exclusively among the Nuers—really began. One who knew them wrote:

‘Complete selfishness, suspicion and childish vanity, leading them to have absolute confidence in their strength even against the man who, they knew, represented “Government,” were among the leading characteristics of the Nuers. Witchcraft in some of its worst African forms is rampant among them, and no man may really claim to have a voice in the affairs of state unless he has established himself as a true worker of big magic, fully capable of propitiating or calling in evil spirits and able to produce rain in time of drought. Among these people came a white man who, at the time of his coming, had not reached what is ordinarily considered the prime of life. He was one well inured to the wilds, sure of himself, and

knowing his own limitations—few as they were for this world of human frailty—his whole heart set upon the establishment of some form of law and order amongst the savage inhabitants, together with such medical or any other assistance as he could provide. A thinker, he had long seen that it was only by going to the root of the trouble that the neighbouring tribes would enjoy peace from the continual raids of the Nuers; and he was fully aware that, if it were in any way possible to gain the confidence of the tribesmen, it must be through his own strength of character and personality and the force of his example. . . . For six long years, extreme patience, understanding, clear thinking and solid hard work, with even harder trekking, occupied him to the almost total exclusion of everything that goes to make up real life for the ordinary being . . . and gradually some of their leading men were given such practical demonstrations of the benefits to be derived from a less lawless and better organized system of society that he began to gain a following and considerable influence. It was all heavy, uphill work, beating down old prejudices which were bred in the bone.'

He brought in to his aid everything that seemed likely to be useful, from surgery to conjuring tricks. With his natural aptitude for doctoring, head and heart alike helped him; and the tricks were bound to produce the right effect when performed by a kindly wizard who loved playing with children.

'Jan. 5th '21. Little Tinker' (the Dinka child) 'has just turned up from Rumbek to see me, with her leg

as bad as ever, and I am again dressing it every morning. The silly child ran away from hospital when I left, and refused to go back, saying she preferred to be treated by a witch doctor; consequently the wound, which had all but healed, has broken out again. I have insisted that she must go back to Rumbek with me, and stop in the hospital. I spend my days now seeing the sick and dressing wounds. I did two operations to-day, removing a diseased heel and scraping a diseased bone in a boy's leg. Yesterday I amused the people showing them tricks. All went well until I found that some powders, which were intended to change water into wine, had gone bad from the heat and wouldn't work, so I had to look wise and pretend that I was handling the water to bring rain. By great good luck, and much to my surprise, it rained this morning—the first time for months—so that was all right. . . . More changes. Instead of going to Wau as was intended, I am to stay in the Eastern District (Rumbek) after all. There has been a lot of trouble in the District since I left, and they want me to stay here for the present.

'As Mann does not go on leave for two months, I'm going to spend my time exploring the Nuer country on my own. It has never, so far, been explored by a white man, and of course there has been no administration in it. If I can get there and make a decent report, it ought to do some good. It will have to be a sort of lightning tour, because I shan't be able to give more than about a month to it, as I must meet the Governor in Rumbek when he passes through. Unfortunately smallpox has broken out

here, and is hampering everything. It spreads like wildfire in a place where you can't keep people from entering infected areas. I have just been holding a Court Martial concerning two murders that might be fairly described as impudent. A Chief and another man were speared and killed in front of Mann when he was holding a court the other day! . . . We had a great dance when we reached Bahr-el-Naam. My bull, Marial, was brought in dressed up with bells and all sorts of ornamentations, and the fighting men of the tribe, dressed up in their leopard-skins, did the finest dance I've ever seen. The people sang all the new songs they made up about me on the last Patrol. The translations are something like this: "When Awaraquay goes to war, his enemies fly before him like marabout storks." And: "Awaraquay, the fighting man, is known all over the world for his fighting." . . . At Rumbek. Busy making all arrangements for my trip into the unknown. There is great excitement about it here, and I shall leave as soon as my carriers arrive.' . . . A month later: 'No mail since I got back. I seem to miss it everywhere. I'm due to arrive at Lau Post to-morrow to meet the Governor, who has instructions from Khartoum respecting my trek into the Nuer Country. I got stranded at the last Post, as all my carriers bolted, being afraid to come with me. However, after a delay of two days, I managed to get them again, and seem to have made them see the advantage of changing their minds. It wouldn't be very pleasant to find oneself planted in the middle of an unknown country, unable to move. I have been



MARIAL AWOOT



ENTRY INTO THE NUER COUNTRY

working hard at anthropology, and hope in time to bring out some information worth having. . . . I've had a lot of trouble with all my servants, including the old cook. They all came up in a bunch yesterday and gave notice, having been scared by idle "gup" that we were all going to be killed in the Nuer country. Cook said that Allah had sent a message to him in the night to say that he would never come back alive. I was really very much annoyed, and slated the whole crowd until they saw reason; but they're still full of grouses and complaints against me, and the Government in general.

'It gives one a good idea of the efficiency of native propaganda. The natives have been for years hoping for a Patrol against the Nuers, so that they might slink in under shelter of Government and enrich themselves with captured cattle. As a matter of fact, I'm pretty certain that the Nuers are about the best class of people in these parts, and would not think of starting a fight against the Government. If I thought there was a chance of our being done in, I shouldn't be so keen to go with an escort of only three soldiers.

'There is great satisfaction in being the first person to set the ball rolling; and I hope to prove that the old theory of the Nuers' hostility is false. I shan't be able to get any mail for nearly six weeks, and I haven't had a cigarette for over a month. . . . Have just seen the Governor, who is keen on my Nuer trip, and says, if I can make it a success, the Sirdar will give me the whole of the Nuer country to run on my own lines as an entirely separate show. The whole

thing will be left in my hands. What a chance!—If I can only get them to come in and listen to what I've got to say. He says the success of my work, if it is successful, will mean the entire re-organization of the Civil Administration in the Southern Sudan. Next month I'll know. . . . Feb. 8th. I left Lau this morning for my trip into the unknown, and here I am, waiting for my dinner, after a march of eighteen miles. We have left the trees behind, and are now in *toj* (swampy grass) country; but, thank goodness, it's dry, so we are all right. I quite enjoyed the day on the whole; seeing places never visited before makes the march more interesting, and one is busy the whole time taking notes and bearings for maps. I shot two red buck this afternoon for my carriers' food. There is plenty of game about, and quite tame, probably never having been shot at before.

'After a march of fifteen miles, without seeing a soul, we sat down at 11 a.m. for a rest at the first pool of water we came to. Here I had lunch, and we pushed off again at 3.30 for another hour to another pool, where I met about sixty of the Shish people, on their way to fish with spears. They gave us a great reception and dance, and then went fishing in the pool, from which they seemed to get quite a good haul. They sent me fifteen mud fish, about 20 lbs. each, but the things are full of worms and not safe to eat. . . . Mosquitoes are bad, but I'm not bothering about any unpleasantness, it's so topping to be off on a Special Mission of one's own, with no end of a prospect if it succeeds! Nothing went wrong to-day except that one of the donkeys

turned out to be useless, and one of the carriers collapsed under his load. I've got all West Coast carriers, from Sierra Leone and Nigeria—Fallatas, they call them. Some of them carry as much as 180 lbs. on their heads. How they do it I don't know. . . . Did about nine miles to-day, and saw a lot of game, including a herd of buffaloes. I shot one tiang for carriers' food. The poor brute walked up to within 100 yds. of us, which shows how little hunting goes on here. The going was very rough, as the ground is all swamp in wet weather. . . . Had a good long march to-day to make up for yesterday's short one, and *such* going! It was appalling—all through dried swamps full of holes made by elephants' feet. How my poor donkeys and carriers got through I can't imagine. My horse came down several times; and I acknowledge I was glad to get in and have a rest at 5 p.m. We haven't met a soul yet, but to-morrow I am due to arrive at the first Nuer village, and then I'll know how things stand. . . . If I do take over this country, I can't see how I am to move about at all in the rains, as it seems to be one huge swamp, and the people grow literally nothing. They live on cows, milk and fish. A bright outlook!

'But, if only I can succeed, nothing else matters. I asked the Governor, when I saw him, if they would take me on after my ten years out here. He said they would most certainly make a special case of me, and take me on pension. If I get this place, it is to be closed to everyone except myself—not even a native merchant or clerk to be allowed in. . . . Everything

splendid, thank goodness! Early this morning I was met on the road by about 150 fighting men in their war paint, with their Chief at their head. They danced round me, sang their songs, and generally carried on like madmen. I then started off with the four Nuer songs I had learnt, which they seemed to find tremendously exciting; and I was escorted to their village, which I entered at 7 a.m.—*the first white man to put foot on their ground*. My interpreter told me to gallop on in front when in view of the village, look at it, and then return at the gallop, calling out the name of my bull, "Marial Awoot"! This I did, which is the custom of the country when a big Chief comes to a village. On my return, I was met by the warriors in wild excitement, and they all prostrated themselves on the ground at my horse's feet. We then moved off to the village; and, having had a good look round, I was taken to a spot where I was to camp. All the people came from the surrounding villages, held dances for about an hour, and then amused themselves by squatting round my tent to watch every movement I made. We had great jokes and laughs, and in the afternoon I went off and shot enough meat for them all to have a good feed, much to their satisfaction. In the evening I doled out beads to the women and girls, and I think they are ready to do anything for me now. They are a funny lot of people; the men cover themselves with white ashes of cowdung, and wear their hair long. Work is done by the women; but, except milking, this is practically nil. . . . They have very large houses, in which they live with their cattle,

sheep and goats. Except from a few thorn-trees, there is no shade; and the ground is nothing but that awful cotton soil, which opens up into huge cracks in the dry weather and makes trekking extremely difficult, whilst in the rains it is all one great slushy swamp, rendering movement almost out of the question. . . . I have to send a runner to the Governor to-morrow to say I'm safe, and now have a lot of work to get through—reports, mapping, etc. . . . I'm crowing, because everyone, without exception, said I was a fool to make this attempt. . . . *Powari*. Spent all day hearing people's complaints and getting information. I'm in a bit of a fix at present about food. There is none here for my carriers; and, if I am to carry on at all, I must send fifteen of them back. The rest will have to exist on game and milk, doing double journeys for loads. . . . Spent a good deal of time dressing wounds, and ladling out Eno's for various ailments. . . . *Fanial*. Got here after a march of $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours through one continuous village. Spent the morning talking to the people, who were very angry that I would not stay longer with them. They said I'd be God Himself if I carried out the trek I intend to, so I don't expect a very easy time ahead. . . . We are all on half rations now, and I'm off out in the morning to shoot something to fill the Little Maries. . . . Shot four water buck, and everyone is pleased. My talks with these people seem to have had success, and there was a great ceremony to-day at which I was presented with a bull called Marial,' (It would appear that, among bulls in darkest Africa, Marial is as usual a name as Smith is among men in

England) 'and my new name, accordingly, is to be Marialdite. (Dite=big). . . .

'They opened their mouths wide when they saw me striking matches, and my looking-glass caused no end of amusement. If only you could see the real, genuinely uncivilized natives, hitherto untouched by anyone at all, you would fall in love with them at once. I had about twenty sick people brought to me to-day; and, when I asked the reason, I was told that the medicine I had given to four people on the road had cured their ailments at once. So much for Eno's! . . . Yesterday I gave some sodamint tablets to an old man with chronic asthma, and to-day he came back, frightfully pleased, saying he had eaten the first good meal he'd had for months, and had his first good sleep. So much for sodamint and suggestion!

'The case of a deaf and dumb child rather baffled me; but I put some oil in its ears, and told its relatives that, if it could not hear by to-morrow, it would be a proof that the drums of its ears had been injured when it was being assisted to enter the world. One can get round most difficulties by judicious handling. . . . I spent this morning talking to the people, and visiting some of them in their houses. In the afternoon I was on the road again; and, after a march of seven miles, halted at a pool in the bush for the night. We had a great send-off from the village people, who came along the road with us for about two miles, singing all the time. Three of my wretched carriers bolted during the night, frightened by the nasty treks in front of them. I had to rack my brains as to how the loads could be re-arranged,

with three more men gone. However, we got on all right on the 15th, and what a day that was! I shall never forget it. We started at 6.15 a.m., and stopped at 8.30 a.m. to rest during the heat of the day, as we had a waterless march of fifteen miles before us, and over the most appalling ground. I started off at 3 p.m. with one man, as I had to get in before dark to take bearings and map the country. I never halted the whole time, and went as hard as I could; but, even so, didn't get in till 7 p.m. It was open grass land the whole way, and not a single tree to be seen. We had an exciting few minutes with a rhino who squatted on the road and wouldn't move. . . . We had to make a *détour*, and luckily he did nothing. When my carriers followed, he scattered them, but did no damage. The first batch arrived at midnight, nearly dead, poor fellows. Those carrying double loads had to remain behind until the morning of the 16th, as they could not get over bad ground in the dark. Six of them got in at 2.30 p.m., and I've had to send out for the other three, who collapsed on the road. I'll have to be a fixture here until they recover. The only food my men have is what I shoot, and when I went out this morning I was so tired I missed both the tiangs I shot at. However, I managed eventually to get a giraffe. . . . *Reath*. Spent the morning in seeing people, and the afternoon in doctoring. Left for a place called Nyot, and started the same old game there. One has to check and re-check everything one hears, because statements vary so greatly, and the natives don't understand the meaning of truth. Also the things one

wants to find out about are so familiar to them as to be considered not worth talking about. . . . Had to remain at Nyot, as the old chief was afraid to turn up. Yesterday, however, I got quite a lot of information out of him, so the day was not wasted. I went out in the evening and shot four tiang for the people, and they were frightfully pleased. . . . This has been a terrible day! I left Nyot at 6 a.m. and trekked three miles to a place called Gnopp, where I had hoped to see another Chief. When I arrived there, the blighter refused to have anything to do with me, and ordered his people not to let me use their water-hole. A messenger was sent to tell me I was not wanted and had better clear off. . . . Fortunately the old Chief of Nyot had come along with me, and he smoothed things over, and got them to allow us to use their water-hole. I was then confronted with my three guides, my interpreter and a deputation from my carriers, all of whom refused to go on with me. I saw each party in turn, and learnt that news had been brought in by several men that our party was to be ambushed and cut up if we went any farther. I made it clear to my guides and interpreter that I had no intention of going back, and told them that the reports were tommyrot, so, after some time, they agreed to go on. I was a bit more severe with the carriers, and explained that they were out to obey my orders, that I would flog—if necessary, shoot—any man who attempted to desert. I made them understand that I, as usual, would go on ahead, so that, if there was any trouble, they would have plenty of time to throw down their loads and

run. We started off again at 2 p.m., and, after a beastly march, reached Borathoing at 8 p.m., where we were well received. This reassured my people; but the reports were really not unfounded, for witchcraft men had done their best to induce the people to attack us, but fortunately without result. We spent the 22nd resting, and on the 23rd had another beastly march, with no shade. Haven't seen a tree for days. I got into Gull at 5 p.m., intending to shoot something for food, but found on arrival that my wretched gun-bearer had broken the foresight of my rifle; and, as my other rifle and carrier did not get in till 7 p.m., I was obliged to kill two of my three sheep.

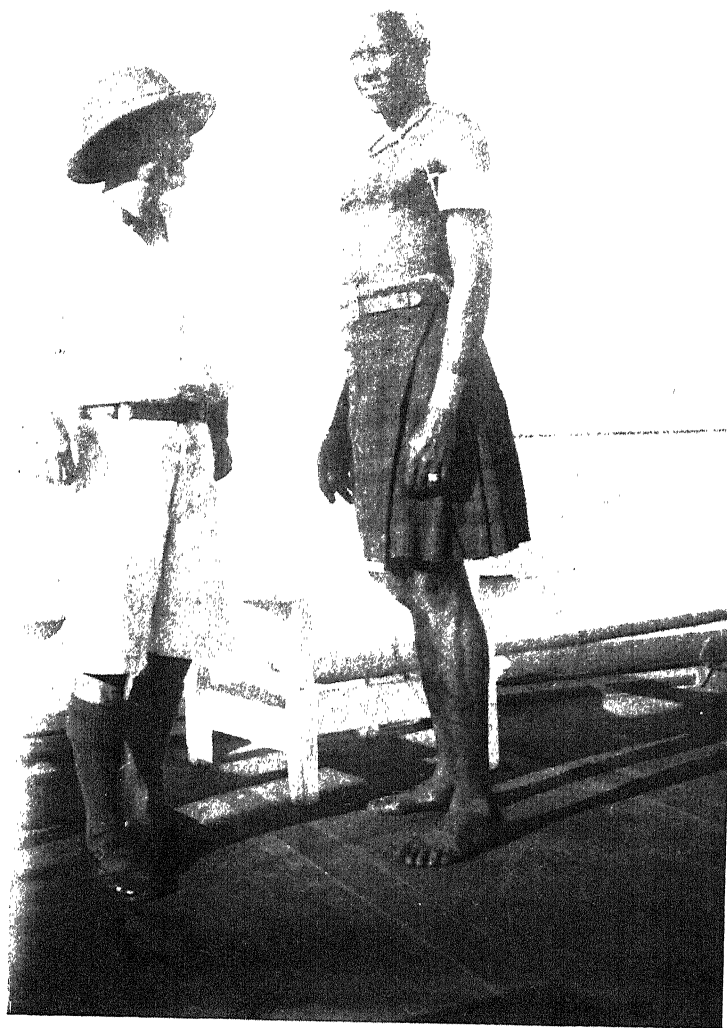
'Goodness knows what we shall do to-morrow; game seems to be getting scarce as we go North, and it's difficult to get any there is, because there isn't a blade of cover for stalking game. . . . *Rouptchai*. Yet another awful march. We started at 5.30 a.m. and the carriers did not arrive till nearly 1 p.m., when I was on the verge of starvation. I wanted to go after game, but found, to my dismay, that my second rifle had lost its backsight and was useless. Now, bar my elephant guns and revolvers, I have nothing except the Government rifles of my two escorts. . . . The people here took the trouble to clean a place for me to sit down, and *under a tree* at last! In the afternoon they brought dura grain—enough to give a feed to the carriers. Poor blighters, they want the change badly enough. I sent out one of my escort in the evening to shoot some meat, and he has just come in with a tiang.

'I am told the people intend giving me a bull for food to-morrow, so we are in clover again. The tiang meat will be dried and kept in reserve instead of the goats. . . . I spent the afternoon giving out medicines for the most impossible diseases—elephantiasis, total blindness, venereal, hernia, and numerous wounds and sores. All brought a small tribute of dura grain in payment, without being asked, so we have got something to eat. To-day, for the first time, I've been able to check my map, and by the blessing of Providence it's correct.

'I'll stay here to-morrow, as there's work to be done, and my carriers need rest. Trekking in a known country is bad enough, but exploration like this is worse; still, if my law of averages holds good, the results ought to be worth the discomforts. . . . I am sending off the last runner I have.'

He was back in Rumbek in the middle of March, and immediately chronicled his reception by Tinker, the small Dinka girl with the apparently incurable leg. He says: 'She treats me exactly like a father, and makes herself quite useful running messages.'—Which looked well for the leg, but it is remarkable how little any of the natives seemed to be inconvenienced by their ailments.

In a few days he was off again; and his next entry was made on the border of the Nuer country, where he had time, while waiting for guides, to do some shooting and make notes of some more songs. The translation of one ran: 'Anyone going with Awaraquay will never be hungry and never suffer any harm'; and the explanation of this hymn of praise



CHIEF TCHARTH

was that some of his carriers, when with another column, suffered from hunger and thirst, and many died of disease, but, when the survivors returned to Awaraquay, sickness disappeared and they had more food than they could eat.

Another ran: 'No one will ever fight again if Awaraquay is in the country, as he can never be outwitted'; and the chorus was:

'We will never fight again.

We lay our spears at the feet of Awaraquay.'

His own comment is very much to the point: 'These songs give a good idea of the people's simplicity. Their attitude is entirely due to the fact that they know I sympathize with them—just as our dogs know when we understand them. If *they* could sing, they would make up the same kind of songs about their masters.'

In April he was at Rumbek, receiving the very warmest congratulations from the Governor (then Major Wheatley) both by telegram and letter; and, when he returned to the Nuer country a week later, there was sent after him a copy of the *Sudan Intelligence* containing a most gratifying account of his Nuer trek. But he was determined to take what he considered flattery with many grains of salt. His characteristic remark was: 'It talks of the excellent results already shown among the neighbouring tribes (a pure brain wave on somebody's part!) and more such butter. If they go on like this, I shall demand an increase of pay!! I only hope it will really turn out a success. If it doesn't I shall probably come in for some strafing, so at present I'm

trying to induce everyone to believe that it's not quite such a sure egg as they make out.'

He got a plough out from home, and sent it to Gnopp, where he was starting a sugar plantation and a large garden. On his next return he reports: 'Tinker going strong—a good little girl, busy sowing millet and ground nuts for me. Her leg isn't cured yet, but she is always full of spirits. . . . I have a tame crested crane now, eleven donkeys and my old horse, Werdka. I want some calico sent out for Tinker and another child, called Nyantchol. I object to having them walk about naked in my house. Smallpox and C.S.M. still on, but greatly decreased. . . . *Wau*. April 27th '21. Got here on the 22nd, and have had long talks with the Governor, who seems much pleased with everything. I am to remain in Rumbek until Mann retires in November. Then I shall start off on my own, and hope to go on leave next year in May. Everything has been left entirely in my hands, which is very satisfactory; and, when I go on leave, no one is to enter the District at all, or to interfere in any way. If only I can get a nice place for my house, I ought to be able to lead a peaceful existence compared with what I have had for some years. Perhaps it's my law of averages working out. . . . I had a game of Polo here a couple of days ago, and I'm so stiff my servants have been rubbing me down with oil. . . . Here is an extract from the Governor's report to the Sirdar on my trek: "I consider Bimbashi Fergusson deserves the highest praise for the manner in which he has carried out this visit. He has shown

himself possessed of tact and common sense, and the perseverance with which he overcame the difficulties of the road cannot but command admiration. He has, with practically no expense to Government, obtained the submission of a large tribe which will, in time, be a source of revenue, and which hitherto has been an anxiety owing to the unrest it caused by unpunished raids on its neighbours." So that's that. How one rises in the world! But falls come just as quickly. . . . I'm due back in Rumbek in three days, and have a mint of things to see to. . . . I want to get a coster's cart sent out, and try one here for donkey transport. I have just been given a baby leopard called Varunin, and a lady civet cat called Violet—a really ripping pair. I've had a great field day with the native merchants, and have made them reduce all their prices 30 per cent.—a good move.

'I'm off with my M.I. in a couple of hours. One of my out-of-the-way Chiefs has risen and killed two of my police, so must be squashed before anything more serious happens. . . . *Nyjong*. Six Nuers, two of them Chiefs, rolled in to see me to-day—the first time they have ever been out of their own country. It made a great stir among the local people, seeing their deadly enemies coming to visit me.'

It was an established custom of the Nuers to raid the Dinkas and steal their cattle whenever they were moved by the desire to possess more than lawfully belonged to them.

'There are on my farm now two horses (Werdka and Winney), fifteen donkeys, eighty goats, nine cows, one young leopard and a male civet cat called

Harry Lauder. Only twenty chickens at present. Tinker is still here; and my house has turned itself into a sort of crèche. I have got no less than seven little girls here, all with bad legs, and one woman to look after them—a decent creature, with a most awful abscess on the bone of her leg. A happy family, barring infirmities. They get too noisy at times, and have to be suppressed. . . . As to Chief Wal Atiang, I arrested him, and he is now in my house at Rumbek, pending a settlement of the situation. He was very angry at being found out, and brought in five huge tusks of ivory and four big bulls for a present to me—which I have handed over to the Government. My name appeared in the "Mentions" about a month ago, but honours are not yet out. . . . Varunin has been getting into trouble, chasing my chickens. She has taken a great fancy to my bedroom slippers, which disappear after I go to bed, and are found in all sorts of curious places later on. She devoured my chamois gloves, leaving only the buttons. . . . I have just discovered some revolting witchcraft (Bir) among my people here. These secret societies are what make administration so difficult. Some of their practices are too disgusting to put on paper, and it is extremely hard to put them down.

'*Lau*. June 26th. The gramophone has arrived. Splendid! The Nuers who came to see me were frightfully pleased with it. . . . Now, here is a curious thing to note: I reached Lau about nine days ago, bringing with me some 250 natives with inter-tribal cases against the people of Lau. The chiefs

here got a bit frightened, and sent their big witchcraft man to meet me and put his Kujur on me, so that the cases should not be heard. He met me on the road before I arrived, and made his Kujur "according to plan"; and here comes the funny part. The following morning, when I got on one of my horses to set off, the brute refused to go on, started rearing up, and came over with me three times on the slippery ground before I got him going. Twice he landed in thorn bushes. However, I eventually arrived all right, except for some scratches and a bruised hand; but I was here for only two days when I went down with a go of fever and had to take to my bed. The Nuers and other tribes were furious, and killed five bulls, six goats and a chicken to remove the witchcraft, whilst the Nuers themselves did sentry-go over my house to prevent any of the Lau people from entering it to see me. Chiefs, Kujur men, old women—all came to see me, and made their various medicines and signs over me in bed; finally they brought a goat into my room, put my head against its head, repeated Kujur slogans, and massaged my body all over. Then dances were held round and round my house to keep off the evil spirits. No doctors could have taken more trouble to cure a simple go of fever; but they evidently thought that, if Kujur brought it on, only Kujur could remove it. I must admit it was odd that my old horse should have become unmanageable for the first time in his life. It has been a busy nine days, and thank goodness I'll be able to get a bit of rest after to-morrow. . . . We may have to face a serious

famine this or next year, as the rains have failed everywhere, and all crops planted have died off. Famines here are awful; the wretched people die like flies, and one is almost powerless to help them. . . . I have heard nothing more about the Nuer country, and don't suppose I shall until the Sirdar returns from England. . . . Sausage has gone. One of the small children let her loose and she cleared off. Varunin is going strong, but has had her bit of raw meat stopped, and her close quarters with Harry Lauder and Irene O'Dare cut off, as she pulled mouthfuls of hair out of them and began fighting in real earnest. She attacked me too, and bit my arm.

'Tinker's leg is now much better; and the man who had his face bitten off by a hyaena is making wonderful progress. I am taking him to Rumbek with me to get the doctor to do a bit of skin-grafting. . . . The rain has come, so we're saved from a famine this time. . . . It will be a work of years to bring the Nuers all under Government, as they are an enormously large people, and those I have got are only a small part of them. Also their country is all bad and swampy—Oh, Lord! My orphanage has started its singing. The children have been very good all day, telling stories; but they always begin singing after food, before they go to bed. . . . *Nyjong*. July 7th. Been busy for some time, trying a lot of people we caught at that Bir society, and we ought to have the thing stamped out before long. I have been dishing out imprisonment for ten years and downwards, which has caused a bit of a stir among the Bir people. . . . We have had three big

cattle raids during the month, resulting in ten dead and several wounded; so now I've got to set to and see about settling those troubles as well. I'm gradually gathering together odd things to take with me to the Nuer country, and have been carpentering my boxes to make them fit for donkey transport. I had a pleasant letter from the Intelligence Department in Khartoum, asking if I had any objection to their publishing parts of my report on the Nuers. . . . Just heard from Brock that I had been given the O.B.E. for the Patrol I was on. He got the same himself.

'Varunin got loose last night and found her way into my bed, eating a hole in the mosquito curtain and chewing up my beautiful green blanket! I have asked the Khartoum Zoo to take over my animals. They cost a fortune to feed, and they pull everything to bits. . . . Tinker is wearing one of Diana's dresses. . . . A couple of days ago the Governor sent me another complimentary chit for settling some more trouble here. . . . A long report from Khartoum on my Nuer trek. Here are some extracts :

"From Sirdar's Assistant Private Secretary to Civil Secretary.

"I am to say that His Excellency has read this report with great interest, and desires that his appreciation of the highly efficient and successful execution of a difficult and delicate mission be conveyed to Bimb. Fergusson."

"From Civil Secretary to Governor, Wau.

"I very fully agree with your remarks regarding

Bimb. Fergusson, and hope you will congratulate him on an excellent piece of work and the compilation of a model report."

"I don't think anyone could expect anything better than that! . . . I'm just off on trek to Shambe (Aug. 16th) to have a look round there. Another large gathering of Nuers arrived yesterday to see me. Half of them I'm sending off with my interpreter to find a suitable spot to build my house on; the others will go with me. . . . Great excitement caused by God having appeared to the people a short distance from here. Marvellous miracles are reported—dead people brought to life, etc. I intend to visit the spot myself and sacrifice a goat, just as the people do. It will be rather interesting to see what happens. . . .

"Yet one more horse rolled in to-day for me to keep. It is to be given to the big Nuer Chief, Madi, as a present from the Sirdar. A very fine animal it is. . . . Had a big Nuer dance this afternoon amid great excitement. I dressed a small boy up in Zanna's knickers and frock. . . . One of my Chiefs is dying of dysentery, and a Zande carrier is very bad with pneumonia. I am sending both in to Rumbek to the doctor. . . .

"Three hundred deaths from dysentery are reported from Shambe, and they have a famine there as well. I must try to arrange about getting food for the wretched people. . . . A tremendous meeting yesterday of Shish Dinkas to protest against my taking over the Nuer country. These Shish Dinkas are doing their best to cause trouble. I had no idea



A ZANDE CARRIER



I was such a brilliant speaker until (after having put four of them in prison) I lectured them hard for over two hours! I had plenty to talk about as I knew their history well, and I had the great satisfaction of seeing them dumbfounded. They eventually went away with the appearance of being quite pleased. It is the easiest thing in the world to talk a native round if you know how to do it. . . . To Lau on inspection duty. . . . Poor Varunin has left me. When I got to Shambe I found Prince William of Sweden and a shooting party had blown in on their way from East Africa. They came ashore and inspected Varunin and the Big Cats, and—they carried Varunin off with them! The Prince took a great fancy to her, and I had been thinking of sending her to the Zoo; but, when it came to parting with her, I was sorry to let her go, the poor thing had got so tame. They all (I mean the Prince's party, not the Cats) spoke English wonderfully well. . . . I turned out my Nuers for their entertainment, and their camera took a film of them.' (This film was produced in London later on.) . . . 'One of my Big Cats died to-day; and, as I write, the other is busy eating it. . . . I shall be glad to get out of this place and settle down in my new "kingdom." Only two more months to wait now! . . . September. I'm stony broke at present, buying horses, donkeys, cows, etc., as well as presents for the Nuers; but, even though it is spending one's own money on a Government job, I consider it worth while. I'm getting what I want, and what one wants has to be paid for. . . . I'm busy now making

sleighs for my donkeys in place of carts. If these are a success, they'll save both money and trouble, as the animals can pull on a sleigh quite double what they can carry. . . . Oct. 8th. There has been a lot of trouble owing to Anti-Government feeling amongst the people (Dinkas), but the crisis is over. It was an absolute intervention of Providence that saved me and the Government—me from being killed, and the Government from being sat upon. Here is the story: the day before I arrested the ring-leader, I attended one of his dances alone, and was given a place in the middle of his people. Speeches were made, which of course I did not understand; but my servant, who had followed me with a rifle, happened to arrive in time to hear it announced that I was to be hit over the head with a club. He said nothing, but walked over and stood by me with his rifle, which saved the situation. He did not tell me about it until the following day, and then I arrested the gentleman who was thirsting for my blood. He is now in chains, and will never see this part of the world again. Several others, who were up to the neck in the plot, have been arrested too; and I have the people in fear of their lives at the moment. I've wired for 250 troops and three British officers, and expect them about the 15th. That ought to finish the matter. Capt. Mann is due here on the 24th, and then I shall clear off to the Nuer country. The "ups" may come as often as the "downs," but we are having the "downs" here now with a vengeance.

'Some of my Nuers went mad and attacked the Dinkas, killing ten, taking off two girls, and captur-

ing 400 head of cattle. On top of that comes this infernal anti-Government feeling among the Dinkas; serious trouble concerning one of the native officers; and then this pestilential Bir society. . . . *Acot.* Oct. 23rd. Fortunately all the trouble here is over. It was about as close a shave as anyone could have.

'There's no depending on these people when once they get a wrong idea into their heads; but for the present I have frightened the life out of them by imprisoning the leaders and getting troops down. If the rising *had* come off we should have been finished, but Khartoum played up well to my S.O.S., telegraphing to the Governor, "Carry out all Fergusson's wishes. His intelligence is always good, and he has never let any one down yet." . . . I'm having great fun here now with my old Equatorial men who were under me at Mongalla.'

His plans for an immediate return to the Nuer country were upset by the serious illness of the man he had been counting on to relieve him; and trouble was by no means over. He had got the rising under in time to prevent further trouble in his own District, but not in time to prevent the rest of the Province from rising.

He wrote from Nyjong on Nov. 3rd, 'Even Mongalla is up, but I don't know what damage has been done, as the telegraph has gone wrong.'

'I've sent off for another Inspector to come at once; but, as a couple of Army fellows at Rumbek are down with typhoid, I expect they will want everyone for taking troops. . . . Nov. 20th. My

District is still clear. They have started round the Province Headquarters at Wau, but so far the rebels have got it badly in the neck. There will probably be a big Patrol in a couple of months, when the grass has been burnt, but I shall not be for it. No more news of the Nuers yet. At any rate, I shan't be allowed to go until things are more settled here, which won't be till February or March. I might then go to the Nuer country for a couple of months, and build my house before I push off home. . . . *Gnopp*. Dec. 3rd. Everything going on well here. I captured 200 head of cattle. . . . Had a letter yesterday from the Governor, pressing me to go on leave. So I will, at the first opportunity, but I'm in an awkward position now. I can't go till I finally settle the Nuer trouble, and I can't leave here until my successor has been with me for a bit and has had time to understand things; furthermore there's to be a big Patrol in March on the borders of this District. I think I've earned a good spell of "fresh air," and six months at home ought to set me up.'

Too long a stretch of the strenuous life will get on anyone's nerves, and when other people's nerves are also frayed there is bound to be a trailing of coats with requests to tread on their tails. Even an exceptionally good-tempered man—as Vere was—put up his back when written to about some rebels whom his correspondent accused him of harbouring. 'I wrote back and pointed out that they had been, and still are sitting down with their cattle, not three hours' march from him, almost under his nose and

in his own District.' Being in the condition of mind which finds relief in scoring off an opponent who deserved it, he was perhaps more pleased than annoyed to receive about the same time a curt note from a certain Inspector who said that, if Bimb. Fergusson refused to release his (the Inspector's) cattle and people, he would come and get them himself. 'I have replied that this is exactly what I told him to do, which will probably make him wild; but if people *will* make fools of themselves they must expect something in return. . . . Dec. 20th. On my way to meet the Governor at Shambe. The trouble still continues here, but there's no outward sign of it now. I made a coup the other day, catching a lot of people at another Sacred Pool, which they had kept secret. They continue to destroy telegraph lines in the Wau District, where things are still in a bad state, and there have been some deaths. . . . Had a letter, asking all sorts of questions, from Professor Seligmann, who is on his way to Mongalla.' . . .

The Sacred Pool

'Fear! I never saw fear. What is it?'

HORATIO NELSON

It might be supposed from Vere's passing allusions to the Sacred Pool that it was a small matter with which he had nothing much to do.

It was one of the small matters that very nearly cost him his life, but on which he laid no more stress than on other native plots, on lions, on elephants, or on the dangers of unexplored countries and unknown savages.

What happened concerning the Sacred Pool—not the secret one, but the one that had been patronised quite openly—was this: It was said to have made so sudden an appearance that it was deemed worthy of being called a Holy Lake; and the bulk of the people undoubtedly believed that the god (Nyellik) would, by means of it, be able to make his wishes known to them.

Whether the ringleaders believed this is extremely dubious; but it is certain that they intended to use it for the expression of their own wishes.

The spirit of rebellion was abroad in the land, and not only among the Dinkas, who had of late given so much trouble. The Atwots were quite as ready to revolt as were their neighbours; the Chief, Dio

Alam, who on this occasion attempted Vere's life, was an Afak-Atwot; and the Sacred Pool was almost on the boundary line between the two tribes.

One effort to dispose of Vere had just failed; and, when his extraordinary daring, which in this instance certainly amounted to foolhardiness, offered a chance of trying again, Dio Alam was naturally very much pleased.

To think that the District Commissioner, who must be put away merely because he represented Government, had of his own free will offered to join in the ceremonies of the Sacred Pool and sacrifice a sheep to Nyellik was almost too good to be true. Of course he should go if he wanted to; but, if Dio Alam could help it, he would not return.

All the Chiefs were to make sacrifice, and it was to be understood that, if a sheep, when once put into the pool, failed to reappear, Nyellik accepted the sacrifice; but, if the sheep came to the surface again, then the sacrifice was rejected.

Chief after Chief took his sacrifice into the Sacred Pool, and the sheep was seen no more. Nyellik was a hungry god, and didn't seem to know when he had had enough.

Then Vere went in. One can hardly credit the temerity of the thing. He knew absolutely nothing of the rules of the game, and he certainly didn't believe that a divine effort was being made to keep the animals under water; but there he was, up to his waist, struggling to submerge his sheep, and scarcely dismayed to find that the sheep 'wasn't having any'.

While the struggle was in progress Dio Alam pushed Vere himself under water; and Nyellik might have kept him there instead of the recalcitrant sacrifice, had not Raik Awow, a friendly Dinka, pulled him out.

Vere was so popular that Dio Alam would not have dared to make an open attempt to drown him. He easily led the people to suppose that Vere's going under was accidental; and, in his address which followed, he told them that Nyellik's refusal of Awaraquay's sheep only meant that he disapproved of the Government, not that he had any personal dislike to Awaraquay. An opportune fall of rain in the immediate neighbourhood of Vere's house strengthened this idea, and for the time being he was quite safe.

Of course there was 'a trick in it,' and it was just his making the attempt without knowing the trick that made his daring so inexcusable.

All the Chiefs had pushed their sheep in at the side of the lake, where the thick rushes held the animals down securely; Vere walked into the middle of it and put his sheep where there was not the least chance of its being kept under—about as mad a thing as anyone ever did. However, when it came to dealing with Dio Alam himself, he had all his wits about him; and it was not long before that enterprising rebel was captured, and banished for the good of the community at large.

'*Nyjong*. January 2nd, 1922. I met the Governor (Major Wheatley) at Shambe, and we have had a conference with the Governor of Mongalla, arrang-

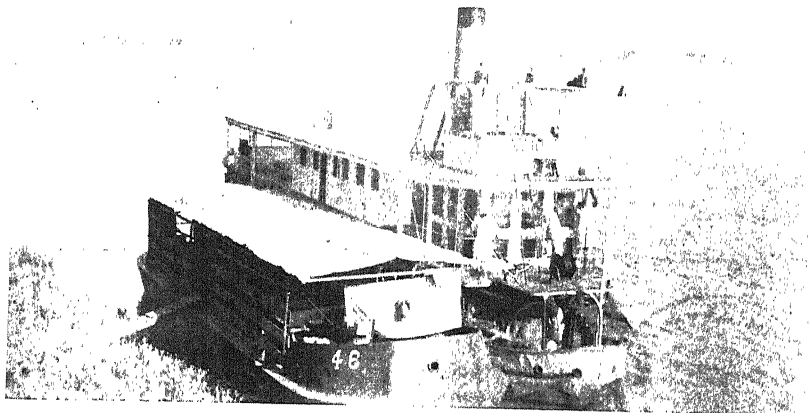
ing to split my District here into two, and take over the Aliab Dinkas, against whom we had our Patrol last year. I am to go off now and take over the Nuers, and am also to take over and administer the Nuers of the Talodi Province, where Uncle John was; at the same time being O.C. of the two new Districts as regards general policy and so on. I am to have, later on, a steamer of my own, and also a Ford car.

‘The Governor brought one down here for me, and it does make a difference. I’m feeling the benefit already. I spent Christmas Day in Lau with the Governor—not much of a holiday, as we were working up to 9 p.m., when, after a hurried bath, we sat down to quite a good dinner with plum pudding. We were off again at 6 a.m. on the 26th.

‘I had looked forward to a peaceful time, but it wasn’t to be, and we came on here, holding a meeting of Chiefs on the way. I think it did good, and put the final touch to doing away with the witchcraft outbreak. There is no more trouble here now, and, with our new scheme, I don’t think there ever will be again—unless something unforeseen happens. Everyone seems to be much pleased with things in general, and I am being given a free hand in everything I do. I made a point of taking a holiday on New Year’s Day, and did not get out of bed until 10 a.m. to compensate me for over-exertion at Christmas! . . . I am to be allowed twenty-four animals for transport instead of fourteen, which is the regulation number, so I should do myself well.

The arrival of the Ford car caused huge amusement. Naturally the people can't understand how it gets along. We shall have difficulty about petrol, which evaporates in the heat, even in so-called air-tight tins. I am busy now making arrangements for splitting up the District, and hope to start for the Nuer country early in February, see the Chiefs for a final conference, and, if all goes well, return to Shambe, get a special steamer to take up my building materials, build my house in the Nuer, and then do a hurried inspection of this District before I go on leave. . . . Wheatley spent two nights here, and was much amused to hear all the Orphanage children calling me Abba. . . .

'*Hillet Nuer*. March 10th, '22. Without doubt this is a tough task I have undertaken; and, if I eventually succeed in bringing these Nuers to heel, no one will be more astonished than myself. Since landing, I have been working with my servants, hacking a way inland, through the papyrus, to firm ground. One has to know papyrus to understand what a job it is, However, the road is made now, and we are working away with the carts, moving my building materials inland. . . . I expected the Big Chief to come to see me; but he pleaded a bad foot, and I had to go to him instead. His place is about sixteen miles away; and, as I had no one to carry my things, the journey there and back had to be done in one day, so I set off in the early morning, with a couple of servants, and some food in my saddlebags. I had a satisfactory talk with the Chief, Madi, and got back at 8.30, absolutely done. I returned to find my camp put in a state of



THE BEATRICE



THE SUD

defence by the servants, who had made up their minds that I had been murdered.'

It was extraordinary that the possibility of such a thing never seemed to occur to him. He was merely amused when it occurred to other people, both black and white.

'The Post Boat arrived from Khartoum a few days ago, and had on board several people I knew. I was asked to dinner, had a great reception, and was loaded up with all sorts of luxuries ("to take home in my pocket") such as vegetables, cake, sausages, drinks; and one fellow most kindly insisted on giving me a sporting rifle. I think the idea of finding a white man landed in the middle of the Sud touched them. . . .

'Please goodness it won't be long now before I can get home. . . . That donkey-cart is a blessing, and arrived in the nick of time. Nearly all the donkeys can pull it splendidly, and my mule draws the Government cart. . . . *Hillet Nuer*. April 18th. Only fourteen days more and I shall be making my way homewards. . . . I was a bit worried about things here, but they've been got over successfully.'

Not a word about his health; but as a matter of fact it was extremely bad. He had been for a long time over-taxing his strength and unable to get the sort of food necessary for keeping his blood in good condition. He was thoroughly run down; and, finding him at his weakest, the climate took it out of him after the manner of its kind. He was covered with boils from head to foot, and they were inside

as well as outside. It seems little short of miraculous that he did not die of blood-poisoning. He was a stretcher case the whole way to Netley; and when passing through Paris, left alone for a moment at the railway station by his travelling companions, he found himself surrounded by sympathetic ladies who had not yet forgotten how they had felt when they saw their wounded soldiers brought home. They wanted to know what was the matter—how he had come to be in this helpless and bandaged condition; and he quite realised that a sensational explanation was required to meet the case. Impossible to mention things so unromantic and disgusting as boils!

These kind 'fairies' must be given the sort of yarn they would enjoy, and he had plenty of French left over from the Swiss school of long ago. . . . When his friends returned to his rescue they were curious to know how he had accounted for himself, and were less surprised than amused to hear his characteristically humorous answer:

'I didn't like to disappoint them, so I said it was the result of an elephant hunt.'

Early in July he was operated on at Netley for internal abscess, and was obliged to spend a month in hospital. After that he had three months of peace and happiness at home; and Tankey was there to meet him—Tankey, who was old now, and had for long been himself an invalid, finding it hard to recall the days of puppyhood, but still made happy by the voice he had heard and the hand that had caressed him at such long intervals throughout his life. It was

good to hear the voice and feel the hand again before the coming of the last sleep. They were not to meet on any future leave, for Tankey went to the happy hunting grounds in the beginning of a black year that lay not very far ahead.

Brothers of the Bog

*We be the men from the marshes,
Sodden and dank and grey, . . .
We, who at last by strength have passed
From out the silent way . . .*

* * * * *

*For all we are so merry,
We, too, are passing wise,
For we have measured strength with Death
And looked into his eyes.*

CLAUDE PENROSE

VERE had a great reception on his return. 'When I arrived at Shambe on the 3rd December, I found to my surprise that Kidd, from Yirrol, Wolff Murray and two other fellows had come up from Mongalla to see me. They presented me with a bouquet of banana leaves, onions, red peppers, radishes, and a few cabbage stalks, with a note attached—"As a token of respect from the British officers at Shambe." We all dined on the Post Boat, and what a dinner that was! At 2 a.m. the Post Boat, with Wolff Murray on board, pushed off for Mongalla. We cheered, and blazed off rifles into the air, and were answered by a rattle of musketry from the Post Boat.'

They were like that, these young Empire Builders, over-driven, burdened with the heaviest responsibilities, constantly ill, more often than not in danger

of their lives, but always ready for light-hearted fooling when the chance offered, taking their pleasure like children, with harmless extravagances. They dressed up, set off table-fireworks, let loose toy snakes for the fun of seeing the native servants scuttle, and enjoyed themselves by the standards of preparatory school-boys. When they felt unusually happy, they expressed it by putting on false noses. They laughed heartily and slept wholesomely. And it was by the blessing of heaven that they could do these things. As a rule 'plain living'—and even scanty—was inevitable; but if undisturbed 'high thinking' had accompanied it all the time, the cases of nervous breakdown would have been more frequent than they already were in these strange places of the earth.

'Yirrol. Dec. 12th. I stayed at Shambe with Kidd and Barraclough until the 6th, when we pushed off on our horses for Yirrol to meet the Governor. I found the donkeys looking very badly, and with a lot of sleeping sickness among them, from which one had already died. On the 4th the people of Shambe came to see me, and brought a bull to kill as a sacrifice. There were great dances, and it was nice to see the old faces again. When we got to Yirrol on the 9th a thousand people were there to welcome us. Dances went on for three days, and we were pretty sick of it by the time it was over. . . . I found two of my servants down with smallpox when I arrived. They were in an awful state, with hardly any flesh on their faces. . . . I found also two pleasant conspiracies on foot, one against me, and the other—yet

another religious affair—against the Government. Kidd has sent out to arrest the lot. It really is extraordinary how I always seem to get news of trouble if there's anything on. Men on the spot never heard a word, although both conspiracies started soon after I went on leave. . . . I hear I am going to be advised to give up the Nuers, which I am certainly not going to do, as I'm pretty sure I have the blighters in the palm of my hand now. I've been writing up lengthy reports about all that has been going on since I left, and it makes very interesting reading! Of course the Governor doesn't yet know how things really stand, and I'm not sure that I shall tell him, as he's been far too optimistic in the past, and it's only by pure luck that things have panned out all right. Kidd wants me to hang on here till Christmas, but I don't know that I ought to. I must get to those Nuers as soon as possible to prevent them from raiding the wretched Shish people again. . . . Tinker considers herself a grown-up young lady now, and I hear she is married. . . . Kidd has been down with fever the last few days, and I want him to get home on leave at once, as he may be getting into the same state I was in. The difficulty is that the trouble I was warned of is likely to come off during the dry weather. It's the Aliabs again. They have apparently arranged to join hands with the Atwots here, and start by attacking this Post; then, if successful, they will carry on their activities somewhere else. Of course these people talk very big, and, when it really comes to the point, don't do very much. However, one never can be sure where a

thing of the kind will end, and it's safer to squash them before they become too excited. . . . *Ardeiba*. Dec. 27th. A very pleasant Christmas dinner, so many old friends all the way from the other side of Rumbek—a six days' journey—just to see me; but Kidd and I were in bed by midnight.

'January 1st, 1923. Mail got into Shambe this morning at 6 a.m., just before I moved off in the old dahabiyeh for the Nuer. . . . I have now an escort of eight Equatorials with me in case of trouble. If they don't like my proposals, I'm coming back for fifty more men and a machine gun. . . . My reputation depends on settling matters within the next eighteen months, and I need hardly say I'm going the whole hog to make it a success. That I shall succeed I have very little doubt, for I don't intend to come out second best in a show that I started on my own. I've sent the Nuers warning of what will happen unless they fall in with my wishes, and I shall be surprised if I am not met with open arms by the majority. . . . A Nuer Chief came to see me at Yirrol, bringing a present of two tusks of ivory, which will do nicely to increase my District funds; and I talked to him so firmly in the Big Noise manner that he left assuring me I should have ivory showered at my feet by everyone as soon as I arrived—which I very much doubt. There's sure to be a certain number of recalcitrants; but I hope we shall be able to avoid a fight. I'm tired of scrapping, and the continual strain of being on the alert wears one out. . . .

'*Shambe*, Feb. 24th. I got back here from the Nuer

country two days ago. Kidd gave me a great surprise by turning up with a force of 15 police and 50 carriers. A rumour reached him that I was cut off and in difficulties, so he set out at once with everyone he could lay his hands on. He is a jolly good fellow, and it's the second time he's done that. We had a splendid time together; I enjoyed the trek with him immensely; and we got our 200 head of cattle back safely. We did 27 miles on one day to get back here to have a drink!

'It *was* a trek; and, now that we have refreshed ourselves, we're off again to-morrow into the blue. I've been absolutely bombarded with wires about this Patrol, and there seems to be great excitement over it all. I'm to meet the Governor at Yirrol next month to explain the situation, and then push straight off on operations, which I am not much looking forward to. I had a pretty hectic time with the Nuers for the last three weeks, and I did a good bit of work; but the situation is still very mixed up and somewhat uncertain. I dare say things will turn out all right in the end. . . . Kidd and I are making the old boat into rather a bear garden at present, and I'm sure everyone thinks we are perfectly mad. Anyhow we are having a great time. . . . I sold my Nuer ivory for £115, and hope to get some more when I go up this time. . . . *Yirrol*. March 16. Our carriers for the Patrol rolled up to-day, so we are moving off on the 18th. Wheatley, Barker, Archdeacon Shaw and a fellow called Brooks of the Telegraphs, all arrived on the 12th, and we had a merry meeting. The Governor was in great spirits, and

had much enjoyed his trip to Tambura and Yambio. He is now writing off to try and get me a steamer instead of the dahabiyeh. . . . Barker as usual was most amusing. He now calls me "Fergenstein," as, he says, I have changed from a confirmed spendthrift into a regular Jew! Richards and Kidd go home in May, and I am to take over their two Districts while they are on leave. Wheatley goes the end of May, and wants me to go to Khartoum with him, but I fear I shall not be back from the Patrol in time for that. Sooner or later, unfortunately, I must go to the dentist. Also the poor old dahabiyeh got bent up by the Post Boat running into her, so she has got to go to Khartoum as well; and, unless I get a steamer now, I'll be left without a craft for the wet weather. We did a good work with Shaw, arranging for boys going to school; so our meeting was satisfactory in every way. I've now got to go as fast as I can to the Nuer country, get the cattle I want, make a couple of people prisoners, and tear back here as soon as I can before the rains begin.

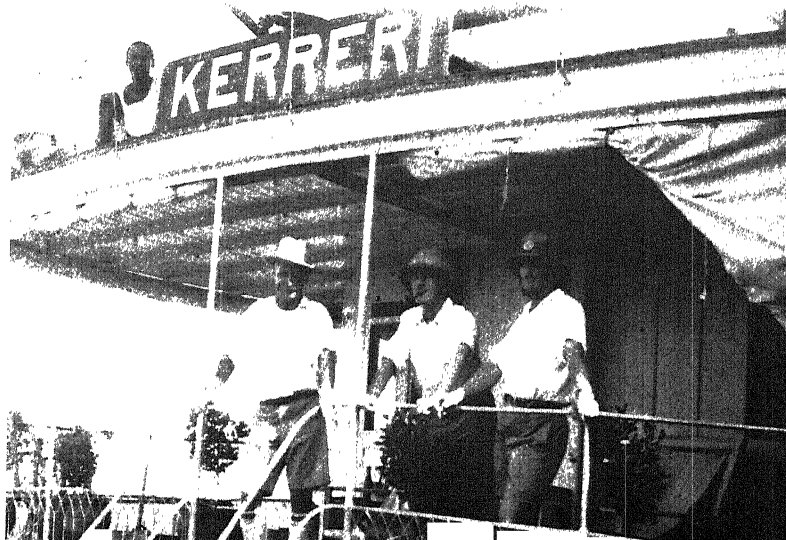
'Wolff Murray is coming with me; but, if things go satisfactorily, I'll drop him halfway on the Post Boat, so that he can hop off home and attend to his own affairs. We've had tremendous dances with the people while the Governor was here; and had some jolly good rags among ourselves too. . . . Getting carriers ready for our move to-morrow. It's very stuffy and hot, and we're all feeling like nothing on earth. . . . March 20th. Kidd and Richards came down on the dahabiyeh for a few days from Shambe until the Post Boat picked them up. We had tre-

mendous rags. Richards and I both got into a pair of Kidd's trousers. The garment would not *quite* meet round the waist, but jolly nearly! We got into Malakal yesterday. I dropped the sick there and had a chat with the Governor, who was very kind and all out to help. . . . *Paponge*. April 22nd. I am squatting down here, hoping an elephant may blow along this way, I went after some a few days ago, but—nothing doing. They were small tuskers, and I had a beastly time slushing through sloppy swamps after them. Wolff Murray left me a couple of days ago. I'm sorry he's gone, for he was very good company. He left me his dog, Nyenabim, a jolly little pup. All the remainder of the menagerie going strong and in great form. I have fine games with the donkeys every evening. . . . *Shambe*. May 6th. Everything in a most awful state, drenched with water; all the fault of a head sailor I've got, who never does a hand's turn. Kidd and Richards are due in here to-morrow, on their way home. I'm meeting Wheatley at Malakal at the end of the month. Am now off to Hillet Nuer to do some work and shooting.

'*Beatrice*. June 13th. I'm on my way back from Khartoum in a very palatial steamer of my own—such a lovely change from the old dahabiyeh. I got to Khartoum on the 1st, and did not leave until the 10th, so had a good old time there. I quite enjoyed myself, and the change did me good; but I dined out every night, and never got to bed until the small hours. Also I got through my job with the dentist—a good thing over. . . . I saw Wheatley, and got



MASKS AND TROUSERS



through a good bit of work with him; and I took my five Chiefs to see the Sirdar, with whom I lunched on the 10th, just before leaving. The trip has done the Chiefs a lot of good, and will make it much easier for me to work with them in future. They are now dressed up in boots, suits of clothes and helmets—the funniest crowd to look at, and must be feeling like fish out of water. Of course none of the boots fitted them, and they went through the most awful agony walking about Khartoum with all the skin scraped off their toes and heels! However, they're very bucked with life now that they are on their way home again and have not been murdered—as they all expected to be. Everyone was most kind in Khartoum, and out to help in the good work; and I got through quite a lot of stuff one way and another. I showed some of my anthropological photos to the head of the Gordon College, a man called Crowfoot. He was very much pleased with them, and is anxious for me to hurry with my book on the Nuers. I'm sweating away at it! It is a job, but I'll have to stick to it and see what sort of hand I can make of things. Crowfoot, too, had great schemes as to our working in together for years to come, and he was surprised when I told him there was nothing doing because I was pushing off soon. However, as I say, something may yet turn up.'

Much of interest that he wrote about the Nuers and their tribal legends has been quoted in *Far Away Up the Nile*, by J. G. Millais, who met and made friends with him while in Africa gathering material

for his book, which was dedicated to the District Commissioners and other Empire Builders of the Nile Valley. In the letter he wrote when sending Vere a copy of his book, he said, 'I know you love those lazy, hopeless Nuer people, because it is interesting to understand any race that others do not know, and especially so as you have been so successful with your administration.'

Besides his collection of folklore, Vere wrote extensively on agriculture, education, administration, and anthropology. Quantities of out-of-the-way information lie buried in his reports, articles and pamphlets. He always insisted that he couldn't possibly write a book, but there he was all the time jotting down enough information to furnish forth a dozen books. He could do it so long as he didn't think he was doing it. The 'sweat' came when the effort was conscious. If only there had been a sternly purposeful collaborator at hand, all would have been well; as things were, a vast amount of good material has been wasted.

'I'm off now to Malakal for a couple of days to see the Governor of the Upper Nile Province, and shall then go straight to Mongalla to see Brock on business. I am picking up Holland and a fellow called Davis on the way, so expect to have a lively time of it. I then come back, and go to Meshra-el-Rek to visit the people there and have a whack at my friend Garluark, with a force of 12 police which I'll pick up at Shambe on my way. Wheatley is to come and visit me on my return off leave; and in December I've got to hand over the *Beatrice*, as she has been

let out to tourists for the season—worse luck. I must have some sort of craft to get about in. . . .

'Khartoum. July 4th. Here I am, on my way back from Rejaf, where I left Brock. I called at Malakal on my way down from Khartoum, did a good job of work there, and then pushed on as hard as I could to Mongalla, where I met Holland, Barker and Brock. By Jove, we had "some" rags! I took Holland and Brock down to Rejaf on the boat, and we had wrestling and every kind of tomfoolery. All in great form. Both go home in a month or so.

'It's been lovely seeing my old haunts again, and I must say Mongalla has improved greatly. Brock, as usual, has his house and garden spotless. . . . I've been working all day long at my book, and my head feels as if it would burst. While I was at Mongalla, a fellow called Cowan and his wife rolled in, and we all dined with Barker. . . . I should get to Shambe to-morrow, where I am to pick up 20 police; and, if the weather is fine, I'll go off after Madi, and see if I can't settle that business once and for all. I had hoped my last strafe would have finished it, but things don't look as if it had. . . . July 8th. Just left Shambe, and am crowded out with 20 police, 8 carriers, and several sick women and children, whom I am taking to see the doctor. I should meet him at Lake Jorr this evening. I only hope it will keep fine and give me a chance of going after Madi from Hillet Nuer. I've taken over part of Mongalla Province and all the Nuba Mountains lot, and have a few more extra jobs to do for Department in Khartoum.

‘They seem to write to me for any intelligence they want these days, and I *can get* it, but it takes up my valuable time. By Jove, I am lucky, with everything going so well up to date! I’m just waiting for a deputation from Madi, who has sent me a message to say he’ll come under me. That practically finishes all I set out to do, and now I have only to get things going on a working basis. Isn’t it good? I wanted to have all these unruly people squashed before Wheatley got back, and it looks as if I’d done it—all, bar one, who is on his last legs. *That’s Garluark*. Only yesterday I returned from a strafe against him. He couldn’t put up a fight, so bolted; but half his people chucked their hands in, and gave 100 head of cattle over to me, which was good. I’ll wear him down by degrees. There was a dramatic fitness about Madi’s surrender happening on my birthday. I didn’t arrange it. It just happened. . . . I am on my way now to visit the other Nuers, whom I haven’t yet seen; but I don’t fancy I’ll have any trouble with them. I want everything to be in working order by the end of this trip, so that I can have good grounds for claiming the *Beatrice* until I leave this country, which is all I want. . . . August. I have a great collection of snakes and “bugs” for the Museum now, which I hope will please them. I’ve just been to Malakal for a day, to dump some sick. I enjoyed the short stay, and had some topping games of tennis. Poor Nyenabim, my grand wee dog, fell overboard the other night and was never seen again, although I had the boat out looking for her. It was very dark, so there was really no chance,

and I dare say a crocodile got her, there are such swarms of the brutes about here.'

No further allusion is made to Nyenabim's adventure, but she is spoken of later as alive and presumably none the worse for it, so it must be concluded that she was by some miracle restored to safety.

'I am on my way to Meshra-el-Rek to see to a few things and to dump a cargo of wheels and iron poles for the Province. It used to be a beastly spot, but I haven't seen the place for some years . . . I had to give one of my boys a hiding, which he thoroughly deserved, for going off and getting drunk in Malakal, and keeping the boat waiting.

'He came to me, bawling like a child, because he got it with a hippo hide whip. The trouble was that, as a hippo is his "totem," awful things would happen in consequence. He said all his hands and feet would fall off and he'd die, and what was he to do! I promised to give him a goat for sacrifice to appease the evil spirit, and that seemed to satisfy him. To-day, however, he has not put in an appearance, and is down with a go of fever; so it looks as if the evil spirit had got him after all. . . . Passed Lake No this morning, and am now making my way up the Ghazal River. I like it, as one sees the game all over the place, even though the grass is infernally high at present. . . . Having settled all the troubles with the Nuba Mountains Nuers, whom I have just taken over, I am now on my way to Wau to see Winter, the Acting Governor, so all is satisfactory. Moreover I have just blotted a really fine elephant—go

lbs. each tusk!—much better than the two I got the other day. I've been very busy to-day with my Chiefs, and hearing numerous complaints from woodcutters; but everything goes on well. . . . Mail just in, and the toy false teeth were instantly useful. One old Chief did not want to go with me to Wau because he'd lost all his front teeth and couldn't eat properly. I produced these, and he *did* look funny! . . .

'September 3rd. Just on my way back from Wau, where I spent a very enjoyable three days, and got through a certain amount of work. There were six fellows there, all told, and we had some very cheery dinners together. At the present moment I'm wondering if this old boat will get blown over, as there's a storm coming up, and I left the barge behind to be brought on by tug. The *Beatrice* is so narrow and top-heavy that it would take mighty little to turn her over, and for this reason she is supposed never to be without a barge. However, I'll take good care to fall clear. . . . Everyone in Wau was much struck with the luxury I live in on board. I really have the boat very smart and comfy; but I shall have to give her up in November, and take on a tug and a couple of barges, which will be a come-down. However, I trust to my pen and ink to be able to wangle something permanent for the future, and have offered now to take over all the Nuers up to Abyssinia if they'd like to leave the running of the show to me and give me a couple of Inspectors. I believe I am to attend a Governors' meeting at Malakal in December to fix up something;

and, all taken together, I have my work cut out. I had a couple of very nice letters from Khartoum, thanking me for one or two piffing little things I've done for them. . . . I have not done any work on my book for ages, not having had a second to spare. . . . Sept. 17th. Yesterday I shot the best elephant I've got up to date—an enormous fellow with tusks 7 ft. 4 ins. long; but, according to my scales, they weigh only 85 lbs. each tusk, which surprises me. Let's hope the scales are wrong! I had a most exciting time. He was one of a large herd of about 1000 animals. The whole place was simply alive with them. The old rascal put up a very sporting fight, and, after my first shot, came for us like a good 'un; but they're so frightfully blind, he hadn't a ghost of a chance. You would have laughed to see the capering about that started at sound of the first shot—animals all over the shop. My boys, like asses, instead of staying with me, bolted in all directions; and one, in his blind rush, got the shock of his life when he collided with an elephant which was dashing about spare. I saw him getting rolled over and over like a golf ball; and the elephant, which was far more surprised than the boy, legged it like the devil in the opposite direction. The lad wasn't hurt at all; in fact I very much doubt if the beast even touched him. . . . I met Owen and Richards on their way to Wau, off leave, and had a cheery couple of days with them. I wish you could see the boat now; the painting is about done, everything in black and white enamel; and smart new cushion covers, etc. . . . I am on my way to Shambe to meet Brock, who is

going on leave again; and then I go inland to visit Yirrol and square things up there before meeting Kidd and Richards at Malakal on the 13th of next month. I shall be glad to be on shore again and get some regular exercise. . . .

'Ardeiba. Oct. 6th. I am on my way to Shambe now, having paid a five days' visit to Yirrol. The place was looking very nice and clean, and I think Kidd will be pleased when he sees what the Mamur has done. . . . I found an awful lot of work waiting for me, and I never got a second to myself the whole time. In fact I had far too much to do and not enough time to do it in. I had a head like a balloon on me after it, and shall be glad to get back to my old boat. . . . My wee dog was carried off by a leopard last night, and now has a huge swollen neck, with nasty, painful teeth-marks all over it. She keeps howling every now and then and making me feel sorry for her. I have just taken on a couple of English-speaking boys from our Mission, as servants. Personally, I don't care for Missionary's boys. However, I'll give them a trial. My book has been shelved for the last two months. A civilian called Jackson wrote a long article on the Nuers the other day. It was sent to me in MS. for my remarks, and I criticised it rather heavily, not knowing that what I said would be published. Luckily he's taken it in the spirit I hoped he would, and this mail I got a long letter from him enclosing a huge packet of all the various notes he has made. It was really most awfully nice of him; and, if only everyone would work in the same spirit, things would go on much more easily. . . .

'I'm hard at work arranging an enormous collection of things I've gathered for the Khartoum Museum. I found the place nearly empty, and have now got an almost complete collection from five different Provinces. I also sent them a big lot of "bugs" and beetles, and about fifteen different kinds of snakes, bottled. I sent too some fresh-water turtles and tortoises to the Zoo, and am now after birds and animals for them. It all helps; and I've had some awfully nice letters from various people lately about it. . . .

'Beatrice. Oct. 15th. I am on my way to Shambe, with Kidd and Richards on board once more. I went up to Malakal to meet them, as this is a slack time for me now until December, when the country dries up and I start trekking. . . .

'Oct. 24th. Am now at Hillet Nuer, and have been busy all day trying to settle a good old mess-up which the Chiefs have caused in the country one way or another. They've been hearing cattle cases, and have been lining their own pockets successfully in preference to doing justice. It's always so when a native has any authority thrust on him. I left Kidd and Richards at Shambe on the 19th and was awfully sorry to see the last of them, they were so cheery. . . . Left Hillet Nuer on the 25th, and am bound for Malakal with a cargo of twenty head of cattle to sell. . . . *Beatrice.* Oct. 31st. I have Wheatley on board with me, and we are making our way to Wau, where I drop him. We've been working out all sorts of schemes for the Province, and for the running of Southern Sudan. When he was in Khartoum,

the Civil Secretary saw him and told him to see me about remaining on permanently in the Service. They are now prepared to keep me in the permanent Service on pension without any reservations as to promotion, etc. . . . I shall have to do about another 15 years, and can then go on Pension of about £750 a year. It means leaving the British Army at the end of my ten years and taking an Army Pension, which will be nice to have on top of my pay out here. Also I have the *Beatrice* for good. So now I know how I stand. I'm getting a rise of pay in January, and Wheatley has suggested that I shall be given control not only of all the Nuers but also of the Annaks on the Abyssinian border, as well as the Dinkas of Mongalla and the Shish, Atwot and Aliab Dinka tribes of the Bahr-el-Ghazal. I should have six British Inspectors under me and an area a good deal bigger than Mongalla Province. Whether that will materialise remains to be seen; but, if it does, it means that my Headquarters will be at Malakal—a nice little station, and healthy. . . . So that's how my affairs stand, and prospects could hardly be more favourable. They have the Governor's word that I've never let the Government down yet; and I've been very lucky in everything I've undertaken, so they are therefore prepared to trust me. . . .

'*Rahad*. Dec. 15th. I am on my way back from Malakal, where I had a gay and hectic time. One fellow had a birthday, which we celebrated till 3 a.m. It was great fun, and I enjoyed it. I got a couple of days' tennis too, which was pleasant. Now I'm off

back to my Nuers, and hope to start trekking again on the 21st. . . .

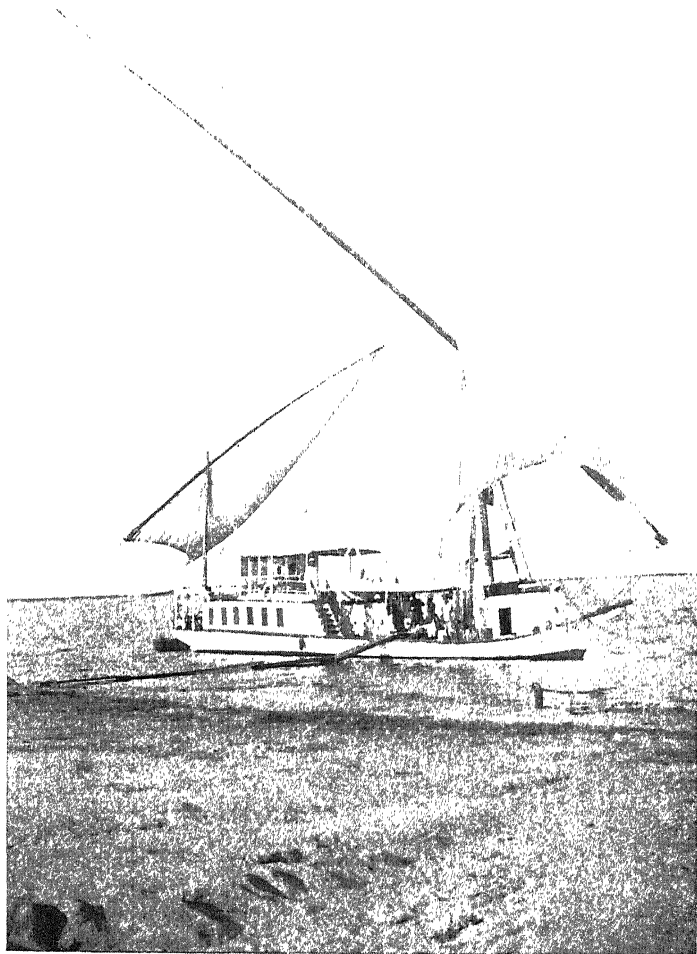
'*Kilwal*. Got back here to-day to find everything O.K., thank heaven; and my messengers report that the proposed fight is off, at any rate until I see Chief Madi. I have already wired for troops to be sent to guard the Dinkas, and have their cattle removed until I give them notice that all is clear; so, if any raiding is attempted, the raiders are likely to be sorry for themselves. . . . We go off on trek on the 20th, so expect a thin Christmas this year. . . .

'*Panyiduck*. February, 1924. I am with Wheatley again, on our way to Talodi for the Governors' Meeting. I got to Shambe on the night of the 4th, and found the Sirdar's boat, *Nasir*, waiting there, with Lady Allenby, a Miss Fern, and a couple more on board. On the morning of the 5th I trotted over to call, and had a chat with Lady Allenby, who asked me to dinner. I really quite enjoyed that dinner, and Lady A. was very kind and sent messages to Dad. She seemed to know all about me and my job, and made me quite at home. She came over to my boat next morning, and took great interest in the nineteen birds I had collected for Khartoum. I dined with her again that night, told her weird stories, had her in fits of laughter, and got a lot of useful information. On the 7th, Allenby, Stack, and their Staff arrived at 11 a.m. in seventeen motors, Kidd and Richards being included in the party. My Nuers were just *splendid*, and put up an excellent show. They looked simply topping—all covered with grease, and wearing feathers and leopard skins!

Allenby was frightfully pleased, and asked me to arrange a special dance for him.

“They did not stop long, and left at 2 p.m. The Nuers, quite on their own, gave them a simply *grand* send-off—rushing into the water, singing, waving their hands, and bowing down to them. Really I have never seen such an impressive show. Allenby and Stack remained waving to them until they were out of sight. The whole trip was evidently one huge success, and the farewell was absolutely great. The Governor, of course, is immensely pleased, and I must say we consider it rather a feather or two in our caps. . . . Everything was so cheery and unrestrained, and not a bit official, so to speak. Allenby asked to be remembered to Dad, and Lady Allenby asked me to stay with them on my way home. . . . *Rahad Tonga*. Feb. 18th, 1924. I’m just back from Talodi, where I saw¹ Uncle John’s grave. It is in quite good order. . . . Northcote—the Governor—said he and everyone were very fond of him, and his death was a terrible blow to them. Oddly enough, I met the Police Sergeant who had been with him, and was present when he was attacked by bees, and also when he died. He said the bees set on them when they were trekking by camel from El Obeid; and, although Uncle John was stung, he got over it all right, having kept some of the bees off with his fly swish. His camel bolted with him too, and that saved him. Shortly after that, his “boy” went down with blackwater fever, and Uncle John refused to allow anyone to touch him but himself. The boy

¹ Capt. Anketell-Jones, late of the 5th Lancers.



THE DAHABIYEH *AMIRA*

died; and, according to the Sergeant, Uncle John caught the fever from him. He was ill only five days, and died in Major Northcote's house in Talodi. The natives all swear that he gave his life for his servant, so you can imagine what they think of him there. I did not tell the Sergeant who I was until after he had finished his story, and he was greatly pleased to hear I was related to him. . . . Wheatley and I had an amusing trip up from Shambe, and on the 12th left Tonga and Talodi in a couple of grand Crossley cars—very swagger! It was a topping change to see ranges of hills, and get a breath of real, lovely, fresh, dry air, after having been on the rather musty old river. Not one mosquito or "bug" did we see the whole time, and even slept at night without mosquito nets. . . . I enjoyed my time very much, and am feeling ever so much better for the change. . . . On the 16th the Governors of Mongalla and Malakal arrived, and we discussed the Nuer problem. The Governor of Malakal wouldn't agree to see them all in one show, but wanted me to take over the Sobat Pibor District, which Col. Bacon is just giving up. I flatly refused; so that ended the matter, and I remain under the Bahr-el-Ghazal as before. I am, however, to take over the Dinkas and Nuers of the Nuba Mountains Province, some of the Nuers of the Upper Nile Province, and all the Dinkas from Mongalla. I am to be given two District Commissioners to help me, and am to wash out the old system of administration and run it on my own lines. It's a mighty big bit of country—bigger in fact than if I'd taken all the Nuers up to Abyssinia, as my

southern boundary will run pretty close to Mongalla itself. It will be a difficult thing to start; but, when once I get it going, there should be no trouble. I'm to have free access to all the other Provinces too, which will mean that I'll be able to fly all over the place, get change of air, and see everyone! Northcote wants me to go to Talodi whenever I can, and Struvé says I can use the Sobat Pibor River as far as Abyssinia in order to see the Administration there, and so foster continuity. It gives me control of nearly all the elephant country, so that I'll be able to do my pals a good turn now and then. I'm off to-morrow to do more trekking, and I hope in three weeks' time to have finished for this year. I must then go to see Kidd, and take him down the river for a job of work.'

A Black Year

I gave you my good gift . . .

* * * * *

. . . And only my good gift is gone.

PATIENCE ROSS

'S.G.S. *Rahad*. March 23rd, 1924. Here I am on my way to Shambe, and really on the last stage for home. I am packing up the stuff to be left behind. I have a couple of "lodgers" to keep me company—a Col. Weber and Lt. Taylor, R.H.A., whom I picked up at Lake No on the 16th. They had hired a native sailing boat, and thought they were just going to sail about and get what they wanted—little knowing that they could not have got anywhere at all, nor seen anything; so I offered to take them with me. Both were most awfully nice and seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. I took them, first of all, up the Bahr-el-Ghazal River, where I had a job of work to do, got them some shooting, and had the luck to put them on to a herd of elephants. However, they had no luck there. Yesterday, too, they drew a blank, as the grass was too high. I am taking them with me to Shambe, and will send them from there to another elephant spot.

'The Colonel amused me, as he started off by living in a smart blue flannel suit, tie, and brogue

shoes. However, I've reformed him, and he now dresses as I do—in a shirt and no tie! His nephew is about twenty-five, such a nice lad, and very good-looking.'

Col. Weber, in his sporting book, *A Novice on the Nile*, mentions Vere's help with much gratitude. His young nephew died before the book was written, and its concluding words are: 'It is in respectful memory of these two that the Novice has dared to publish this account.'

'My larder is beginning to run somewhat low, and I don't quite know how I'm going to feed Kidd for ten days, and then Richards and Barker for a week or so, and then Northcote and a fellow called Ariat, who are going down to Khartoum with me.'—But he took on the lot, trusting, no doubt, that the ravens would see to it.—'It's been horribly hot and uncomfortable the last couple of weeks, and we've had a few days of rain which has made the air nasty and muggy. I'm going to have another night raid on Garluark on the 16th of next month, just before I leave for home; and I have permission for Richards, with 30 troops and a machine gun, to come and shove it across. I had a long letter from Wheatley a few days ago, full of beans and our schemes—his and mine. We are working splendidly together. . . . I was met at Shambe by Kidd and Richards, and on the 2nd of April we motored to Yirrol in a Ford lorry, which was a bit of a scrum, but we amused ourselves by singing most of the way. We have been playing hard sets of tennis every morning and evening, which has done us all good. I've been mending a

few lamps, a gramophone, and Kidd's typewriter, which had gone phut. We've had a man belonging to the Audit Department and another fellow here for the last couple of days; they both left us this morning. The two extra made an awful scrum for the bath! We're waiting for Winter, who is due to arrive from Wau about the 7th, and then Kidd and I return to Shambe and go up-stream for ten days. . . I shall be starting for home in a fortnight.' . . .

It should be explained that Vere had been engaged for nearly two years, and that he was going home to be married. He reached London on the 30th of May, and the wedding was to have taken place on the 11th of June. But it did not take place then, or ever. . . . Still, there were worse things that Fate, the Fickle Jade, might have done to him; and, so long as the real worst does not happen to a man, one may keep pity for those who suffer the kind of pain and loss from which there is no recovery. If his mother had gone out of his life, it would have been a far greater blow than this which had been dealt him. That would have been the real worst. He had always loved her best in the world, and always she would have stood first with him. Throughout his life she was his to turn to in every joy and sorrow, and therefore, no matter what happened, while she remained to him, he could not be regarded as deserted and alone. But, at the moment of its falling, the blow must have been a heavy one. It would hardly be necessary to mention what was certainly not a matter of public interest, but that an incident in connection with it throws a perhaps unexpected light on

his nature, suggesting a psychic gift which might have surprised many who knew him well.

Just before his return to the Sudan, a very old friend wrote him a letter of intimate sympathy; and, in answering it, he told a curious story, very simply and reverently. He said that, some months before he came home, he had had a dreadfully unhappy dream—a forewarning of what was to happen. He had not, at the time of dreaming, the least shadow of reason for supposing that anything threatened his happiness, but in his dream he heard said the exact words which he was to hear again when his illusions were dispelled; so that, when actually spoken, they were robbed of the power to shock which lies in a complete surprise; and he thanked God for having in this way made things easier for him.

In these days the world is concerning itself with psychic gifts more than it has done since the early days of the Christian Era; one seems to be met with evidences of them at every turn; and there is interest in knowing that Vere was open to the prophetic suggestions that come in sleep. Years before, when he was at Wellington College, he got news of the death of a favourite uncle, and, in writing about it, he said—‘I knew before I read the letter, because I dreamt last night that he was dead.’

Once, when he was even younger, he woke in great distress, having dreamt that danger threatened his mother; and, by listening to what the little child told her, she was able to avoid the danger. His mind never dwelt on the occult, nor was he ever thrown

in the way of being interested in speculations on subjects of the kind; but the fact stands out that three times in his life he had been 'warned' by the Power that presides over sleep.

On the 14th of August he had a cable recalling him on account of troubles in the Sudan; and, for once, he was not sorry to leave England. His diary (in reality a long, continued letter, posted in parts, as opportunity offered) was started again at Hirjah in September.

'We got to Khartoum on the 30th of August without incident, and one of my small boys met me at the station. I reported to the Civil Secretary next morning, and did my best to get out of going to Port Sudan. However, without avail, as they imagined there might be more trouble there, and ordered me to leave on the 2nd. . . . Instead of waiting until the expiration of my ten years with the Gippy Army, I have decided to chuck the Army now, take my pension of £230 a year, and remain in the Sudan Government until I am forty-eight. I had a long talk with them about it in Khartoum, and they have agreed to put things through without delay. . . . I have not yet put in my official application for the transfer, as there are several points in the contract which I want time to consider before finally deciding. My boat, the *Kerreri* (named after a hill near Omdurman), was not in Khartoum when I arrived, is not due there until about the 9th, and she then has to go into dock for repairs before being handed over to me permanently. Everything, therefore, is satisfactory.

I left on the 2nd for Port Sudan, and, when I had got halfway, received a telegram ordering me to return. I didn't fancy turning out in the night at a moment's notice, so went on to Port Sudan, had a cheery evening, and caught the 9 a.m. train back next morning. I put up at a very nice hotel, and rather liked the look of the place, although it was certainly a bit hot and sticky. Yesterday morning early I woke up to find the line had been washed away by the heavy rains in the night, so I've been squatting down waiting for the line to be mended, and we're not likely to get away before to-morrow. Personally I don't mind, as the country is high, the air beautifully cool, and the surroundings pleasant, with ranges of high, rocky mountains running as far as the eye can see. This morning I borrowed a rifle from one of the English Engineers in charge of the breakdown gang, and, taking a local Arab with me, set out after game. . . . I shall be busy when I get back to Khartoum, collecting all my kit and making my boat comfy. I have asked a fellow called Walker and his bride to come down south with me. We have a few British Tommies on the train with us, and it's amusing to watch them playing about like children with the natives, who seem to love them. One of them got ill last night with a go of fever, and I dosed him. He is all right this morning. I had a letter from the Governor, furious that I had been recalled, and urging me to go on leave again within the year.

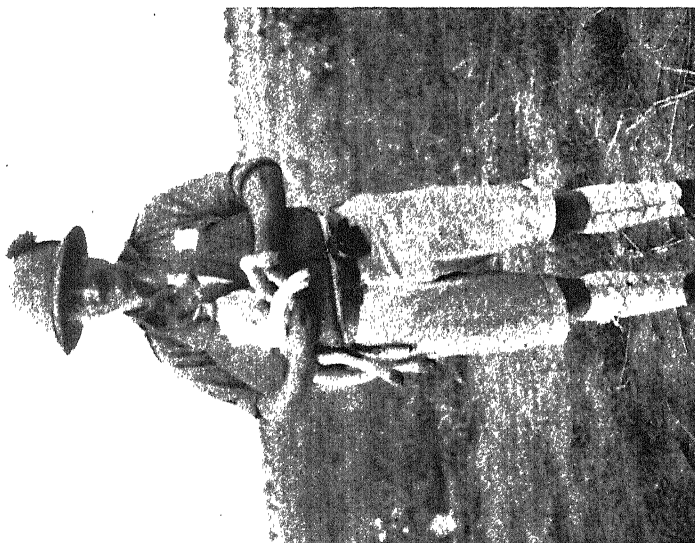
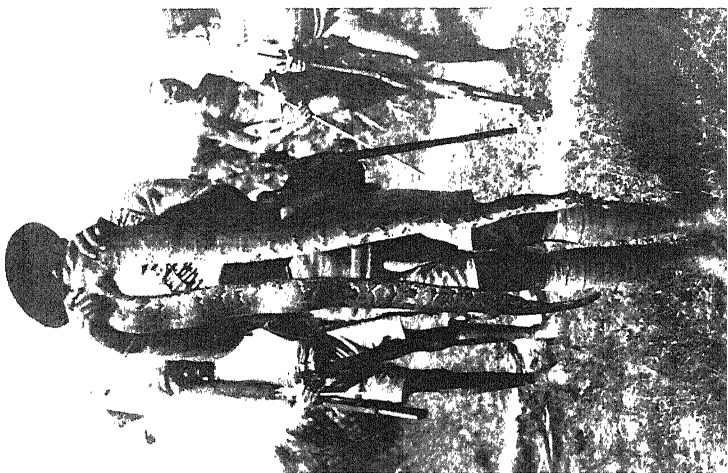
'*Khartoum*. Aug. 16th. I have been very busy buying stores, and furniture, etc., for my boat. I

went to inspect her a few days ago, and was much pleased. She has a fair-sized dining-room saloon in front on the main deck, with quite a decent side-board fitted in. Then there are a nice small pantry, five small cabins, and a big double one for myself in the stern, opening into a private bathroom. The bath has had a shower contraption fitted to it—altogether very palatial! Then, upstairs on the top deck, I have a good, big mosquito-house, which I am going to use as a sitting-room. There is a large awning too, which covers nearly the whole of the upper deck. I'm going to have tubs of small trees, with different coloured fairy lamps, and turn it into a sort of roof-garden. The Boat Dept. have given me only one fan, so I am ordering a couple more electric ones. I found all furniture I had left with the Mission people was in splendid order; they had repaired and revarnished everything. Yesterday I bought five carpets in Omdurman. Prideaux has given me a heap of useful things, including a long mirror, a bookshelf and books, pictures, a set of dining-room chairs, two armchairs and a lot of other things. To-day a man and his wife begged me to swop my boat for theirs; and theirs was—the *Beatrice*, which I had before!

'I have the Walkers, Mr. Kingdon and Col. David going down with me from here; and then I pick up Kidd from Malakal and take him to Wau. Nearly all the crew are men I have had before, which is pleasant. . . .

'Wau. Oct. 14th. We had a great send-off, and the barge is smothered in plants of all kinds, which

were given to me by the R.C. Mission, Wheatley, and the Army Mess. They also gave me a big collection of seeds, and I have several boxes of mustard and cress and radishes sown already. The priests presented me with four pieces of tapestry, showing the principal places in Venice. . . . S.G.S. *Kaibar*. Here I am on my way back from Wau. When we arrived at Lake Ambadi, Kidd, Kingdon and myself transferred to my barge, and we got towed up the Narrows by a tug from the *Kaibar*. The channel is too narrow to allow a steamer to tow barges. I fitted the barge up quite comfortably with carpets, plants, etc., etc.; and, with tarpaulins off the *Kaibar*, made a big living-room, where the three of us settled in like boys in a dormitory. It was a bit of a scrum; and on two occasions when it rained we got pretty well soaked; otherwise it was really quite pleasant. . . . We got a great reception at Wau. Wheatley and all the Britishers turned out, as well as the missionaries, merchants, and hundreds of natives. . . . There had been a bit of a "bust up" in Wau recently on account of the Egyptian trouble, but that, I think, is finished and done with, although they have to keep a pretty close eye on everything, and see the troops are not interfered with. The Shish Dinkas in my part of the world have also not been as good as they might have been. . . . As Kidd now comes under my wing, I was taking him to Wau for the purpose of talking everything over, and we were then to go back to start on my new work of taking charge of his District and some of Mongalla Province as well. That alone would have given me



a good deal to do, even with Kidd to assist me; but now the doctor has ordered him home immediately, which makes things very awkward for me, and I really don't know how I am going to get through everything. I had thought of sending him to Khartoum, but when the doctor saw him he said he was in such a bad state of health that he would have to push him off to England. . . . The cotton growing seems to be doing quite well, considering that it is the first year it's been tried. Most of my people have planted a certain amount. Knowing what they are, I think it is wonderful that they even condescend to do anything at all. . . .

'Lake Ambadi. Oct. 23rd. I am giving Kidd a Dorcas gazelle head to take home. . . . Everything is more or less quiet now in the Sudan; but the Egyptians have succeeded in making a pretty good "bust up" all over the shop, and hardly any of the young native officials are as they used to be. Some are most truculent, and are under the thumb of the White Flag Society, which was raised to turn out the British. I suppose in time it will all fizzle out, but at present one can't trust anybody. I heard by this mail that an old Mamur I had at Rumbek some years ago is now in prison in Khartoum—the last person I should have thought would mix himself up with such a thing. . . . I'm much afraid I shall have to have another row in the Nuer country. I hear from many sources that old Chief Madi has been joined by Garluark, and they are out for trouble in earnest this time. When I reach Hillet Nuer I shall be able to get more definite information; and, if

reports are true, I shall have to get hold of some troops and go for them in January. It's all very disappointing. I had hoped the strafing was over and done with.

'Kidd's going away has heaped the work on to my head, and I shall see mighty little of the boat when once dry weather sets in. It's all in the day's work, and this job has its ups and downs more than the average, I think. I shall not be sorry when my fourteen years are done. . . .

'*Kerreri*. Oct. 29th. I have not yet heard anything definite from Khartoum, and I can't say it worries me much. I don't think I shall be going home before May 27th, as I must get my people settled for good. As soon as I put my foot out of the country there is sure to be a "bust up," entailing a strafe when I come back; and I'm getting rather fed up with eternally fighting the people. . . . I've given Nyenabim away to Cann, who was looking after her while I was on leave. His wife and small child got so fond of her, I thought it was just as well to let him have her. I can take her away with me sometimes for a spot of leave! I had to sell my old horse; however, it was Kidd who bought him, so I shall see the old fellow now and then. Kidd and I arrived at Malakal on the 26th, just too late to see the British troops who had gone there to put down the disturbances. We had a jolly little dinner there, five of us; the masks came in splendidly, and Kidd was very amusing. He left by the Post Boat on the 27th, and I was sorry to see the last of him. I am now on my way to Mongalla to see Brock about taking over the Aliab Dinkas. . . .

Nov. 23rd. There's such a lot to be done that it's all I can do to get to bed. When Kidd comes back it will be better; and I shall be glad when he does, because I couldn't keep up this pace for long. I went down to Mongalla and picked up Holland on the way. He is still looking very ill, and was covered with boils. He goes home in January, I think. I had a quiet two days in Mongalla with old Brock and the Governor, a man called Skrine. I took over the Aliab tribe from Holland, who was pleased to get them off his hands. More worry for me; but I think they'll do better under my show. I rushed off back to Shambe, did a flying visit to Kidd's people at Yirrol, where I changed the scheme of administration after a most strenuous two days' work, and then flew back to Shambe again. The road was bad in places, and under water, so I had to have people waiting at the worst spots to carry the motor through. What a job it was too! But we managed it all right and I enjoyed the change of air.

I stayed with Richards at Yirrol, but did not see much of him except at dinner. When I got back to Shambe I found my 70 carriers and 55 police ready to embark for "the front." We had a great send-off when we left, this afternoon; and anyone would have thought we were off for a couple of years or more. I quite liked seeing Yirrol again, and all the old friends, but such visits are a bit expensive. My two English-speaking boys have gone. I employed them as clerks in my District, and am sorry to lose them, but they are better employed under Government. I have a couple of local boys in their place,

but they have got to be taught. I am due at Hillet Nuer to-morrow, so in a couple of days I'll be off trekking once more, and shall be at it until April or May. I can't say I am looking forward to it—except that I get another 9s. per day travelling allowance, which helps things along! I saw my old horse at Yirrol, and some of my donkeys; curiously enough, they seemed to know me. I wish I had them now, but it was useless hanging on to them. . . . I must go and exercise myself. I have been glued to this table all day, and have made a nice big hole in my work.

'Nuer Country. Dec. 3rd. Mail in last night, and by it news of the poor Sirdar's murder in Cairo. I'd like to wipe the whole lot of the brutes off the face of the earth. Only the other day there was a warning in an Egyptian paper that we should all be killed. . . . Poor Northcote's in trouble, and troops have been sent up to relieve him at Talodi. I, too, have been having an exciting time and am in for another war. It's terrible all this unrest. These fellows of mine are brutes of the first water, but I'll get them to heel yet. . . . I had a wire from Khar-toum warning me to go before a medical board in December for pension, but I've told them it couldn't be done. I am sitting down now, waiting for a Chief. I ordered him to come with me to-day, but he has run away; so I have sent out to bring along his wives and children. This infernal country of mine is progressing a little, but it's mighty slow work. They are all so uppish and headstrong. Only last night, when I was at one of their dances, they started to have a

fight right under my nose! I am very fit, but I have such an enormous stretch of country to run (and nearly the whole of it upset) that, at times, it makes me feel very old, and I long for the day when I can retire for good at forty-eight. Yet it seems only the other day that I joined as a Tommy at Gravesend! . . . Bad news from Khartoum. Some of the troops have mutinied. Three British officers have been killed, including Carlisle, who was murdered when the mutineers took refuge in the Hospital. It was blown to bits by gun-fire and bombs. A bad business. I am back on my boat again, but am feeling mouldy, with cold and neuralgia—result of sleeping out in the open, with a heavy dew on. Prideaux sent me a topping little pup by the Post Boat, but the first thing the little beggar did was to smash half my good tea-set.

'Kerreri. Dec. 16th. Heavens! What doings there have been since last I wrote! The whole country has been in a ferment. I was most awfully shocked by the news of the Sirdar's death—such a topping man, and always so kind and friendly. What can one say of those Egyptians? But the Government has evidently made a good stand against them, and it seems that we have taken the Sudan over from them for good and all. That is splendid, and now we can get a bit of a move on, and not be tied down by a hundred and one petty worries from Cairo. My wire for help must have arrived almost in the midst of the Khartoum affray, and I was much afraid they would not be able to spare me the troops; but they have sent them, thank goodness. I met a boatload of them

going to Shambe two days ago, switched them off to Hillet Nuer, and am now on my way back to fix them up, prior to going to Shambe for the remainder of the troops and carriers. I shall have about 200 men, two machine guns, and about 300 carriers, so that we should be able to make short work of anything that comes in our way. The whole country is in a perfect ferment now, some of the people frightened out of their lives, and others out for blood. Poor devils, they won't half get a shock if they do bump their heads into us. I'm only afraid now that they may lose heart at the last moment, and bunk before I can do anything. I must say I am glad that the "bust up" has come at last, for, when once it is over, I should have the other Nuers in the hollow of my hand. . . . Holland sent me a big box of fruit, and Wolff-Murray sent me a lot of good things for Christmas by the last Post Boat. His wife, too, wrote me such a nice letter. It was so thoughtful of them both. . . . I am now working strictly to programme. It is essential to do so, for I have to fix everything in so that our first attack on Chief Madi should take place when the moon is full. . . . I am stuck to this table the whole day long, and never get a free minute. It makes the time pass quickly, but ties me down if I ever want to do anything. I shall be thinking of you all on Christmas Day, and shall probably be alone on the boat. . . .

'New Year's Day 1925. We move out to meet Madi to-morrow. . . . I spent Christmas Day at Shambe. Arrived there at 8 a.m. to find Richards, Roberts and Kingdon all waiting to see me. The

first two are coming on the Patrol with me, and Kingdon has been supplying me with carriers and grain. They insisted on giving me dinner, which we had on my boat. I had the crackers Wolff-Murray sent me out for dinner. It was a very mild affair, and we retired to bed at 11 p.m. Kingdon disappeared at the soup course, as he was not feeling very well. Our toast was a silent one—in fizz. On the 26th I motored to Yirrol, and spent a few days there fixing up things. I got back to Shambe on the 29th, and was busy arranging carriers and grain for the Patrol prior to moving off on the 31st for Hillet Nuer, where we are due to arrive this afternoon. You can imagine I have my hands pretty full now, with a huge collection of people on board, over 400 soldiers, police and carriers. The extra weight on the poor old boat has knocked the steering gear all wrong, so that our progress is slow. . . . Mail in. . . . Yes, all those disturbances and the Sirdar's death were terribly sad. We have great hopes that things will improve tremendously under the single Administration; the joint affair was impossible. Even now there is a marked improvement in the tone of the junior officials, and I don't think there is much chance of any more trouble. The White Flag business may fizzle out altogether. I have heard nothing more about my scheme, and don't suppose I shall until Sir Geoffrey Archer, the new Governor-General, has taken over. He passed by here a couple of days ago when I was at Yirrol. . . .

'Jan. 18th. I have sent you on my official report for the Patrol, by which you'll see we had one ex-

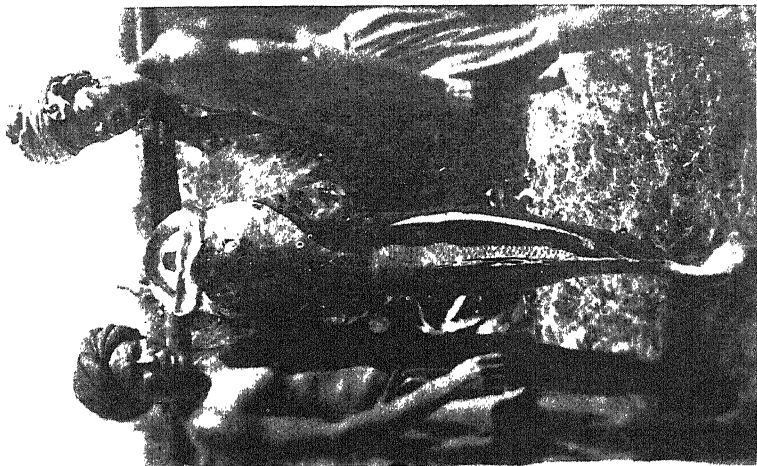
citing scrap and shoved it across the Nuers properly. It was a fine sight to see them coming on, and I give them full marks for bravery in face of a pretty hot fire helped by a couple of machine guns. It *has* taught them a lesson. . . . I must say I am most awfully glad they attacked as they did, for never again will any of them try to be truculent with me, and I ought to have them eating out of my hand. News came in to-day that both Madi and Garluark wanted to surrender. By Jove, if they do, it will be a great feather in our caps, and more than I hoped for. We have had a very interesting time, and our night attack was quite a triumph, because they got no news of our coming and, through sheer luck, we evaded their scouts. The first warning they had of our presence was a hot machine gun fire opened at midnight. . . . They ran like Old Harry, and we walked off with 1000 head of cattle, a good many of which were blotted during the attack. . . . I only wish I could have taken a photograph of our first show, but the whole thing was so sudden that there wasn't time to think much, and it was sheer luck that we got the troops and carriers under cover in time. I was helping to put up the wire entanglements when they attacked, and the carriers were clearing a field of fire in front. Like idiots, when they saw the enemy coming, they just stood still and gaped at them, thinking it was a good side-show. I yelled at them to come back, and then dived under the wire myself. The row was terrific, and they were so close that nearly thirty of them came within a few yards of the entanglement before they were blotted. Had

the bush not been so thick and so near, we should have inflicted awful slaughter; but we couldn't see more than fifty yards. It was a sight that very few of us see even once in a life-time; for, although there are continual Patrols, the people generally have sense enough not to attack a stationary force. I am pleased, too, because it confirms the reports I sent in, in which I said that we should be attacked at Yirkwow. Richards, who is operating in the North, has had some fun. I hear he captured some cattle and did well all round. I had a wire from Wheatley asking me to meet him on the 9th of February and go down to the Governors' Meeting with him. . . . Vic is full of beans, and wakes me up at 5.30 punctually every morning for a game of "bears"; you should see my bed after it!

'Kerreri. Feb. 2nd. Now that the strafe is well and successfully over, I am on my way up the Bahr-el-Ghazal River, to have a look at the two Posts and make arrangements for removal of captured stock. The troops left me on the 31st Jan. at 1 a.m. . . . I was most awfully glad to get back to my boat and a spot of comfort again. She arrived in at 8 p.m. on the 29th, so the three of us rushed on board, danced, played the gramophone, and behaved like lunatics. I found the deck garden in perfect condition. The lettuces had done splendidly, and were as big and good as those we get at home; spring onions ditto; cabbages and tomatoes doing well too; so I now have more green vegetables than I can eat—rather a change in this part of the world, where it is so hard to get anything in that line. With all the plants up,

it looks O.K. . . . I had an agreeable wire from the Civil Secretary in Khartoum. Just two words—"WELL DONE"; but it was pleasant to get. . . . I spent last night darning eight pairs of socks—a nasty pastime; but it didn't take long. I just sewed up the holes anyhow. . . . Feb. 6th, Everything going on splendidly. Both Madi and Garluark have sent in a present of cattle, and want to give in. The people are amusing about it, for not a soul will befriend them now for fear of getting their villages burnt, since I gave out that anyone recognising them would be for it. One village rushed in with twenty head of cattle because Garluark had had a meal in one of their houses when he was passing by. I may tell you I had not heard of it! It shows how frightened they are. I am due at Shambe in the morning.

'It's rather a rush getting everything done, but then I live in one continual rush these days. I am afraid I shall be without my nice boat for a bit, as the boiler has cracked and water is pouring out of it. I am chock-a-block with cattle and carriers. I buried two fellows this morning—from dysentery. Bad luck for the poor fellows, just on the last lap. . . . Mail in. To answer your letter; I had Teng removed to Yirrol, where he is sitting down, being taught the ways of Government; and, as soon as he proves himself a capable fellow, I will allow him to return. . . . Nothing more has been done concerning my transfer, as I can't get away to be medically examined—a necessity before it can be shoved through. It doesn't worry me much, especially as the new Governor-



General has been writing and talking a lot about change of policy, etc., and I'd sooner see how things stand before committing myself finally: I hold some very strong views on administration; and, if they want to introduce any appreciable diversion from my present methods, I should prefer to chuck my hand in. I am now on my way back from Mongalla with Wheatley from the Governors' Meeting. I can't say we enjoyed it, for there was a good deal of hostility throughout the meeting. . . .

'However, I may tell you we won hands down in every case, and Wheatley conducted his part of the business awfully well. Brock and I were joint secretaries. Nothing much happened until they came to the question of inter-Provincial boundaries, agenda which affected me. Wheatley and I knew jolly well that there was going to be a "bust-up," so decided to keep silent and let the other two start off with what they had to say. The President read out the Minutes; and then there reigned about ten minutes' silence, as the other two had evidently put their heads together and decided to let *us* start. I nearly burst out laughing, knowing all the ins and outs of the case. However, as we wouldn't say anything, the President said that he did not propose to discuss it, as it was purely a matter concerning the Upper Nile and Mongalla Provinces, and had nothing to do with us. Wheatley then said he entirely disagreed, and wanted to hear what they had to say. Their whole idea was to prevent us from taking over more territory and so reducing the already small provinces, which they thought was our plan of

campaign. Wheatley, however, entirely knocked them off their perch by suggesting not only the exclusion of my area from his own Province but also the handing over to Mongalla of another very substantial portion of the Southern Bahr-el-Ghazal. You should have seen their faces! It was as good as a play. And I really believe it frightened them to think we might be giving them more than they could cope with. I must tell you that the outcome of it all was that they proposed handing over another strip of Mongalla Province to me, and that my area should be cut off and made into another Province of which I should be Governor. I said I would be quite willing to take it on under certain conditions, which I would put forward in the near future. Mind you, I don't think for one moment that Khartoum will agree to it; for it would mean lifting me over the heads of goodness only knows how many fellows, which would cause a most awful lot of ill-feeling. However, we'll see. At any rate, it was rather an honour having it even suggested. If it is approved, I could not take over until January, for it will mean a mix-up of all the budget estimates, a total reorganization of staff; and then I shan't be allowed to pick my own District Commissioners. So you see how things stand now. As to my scheme about Wheatley taking over the South, Sir Geoffrey Archer has unfortunately turned it down, and Wheatley has put in his application to be allowed to retire. I shall miss him greatly, for we have worked together so very well in spite of a good lot of opposition. However, that can't be helped. I've heard

no more about the Patrol, except a couple more wires of congratulation from the Adjutant-General, Huddleston. They have asked me to meet the Duke of York at Shambe next month, but I'm afraid it will be impossible, owing to pressure of work. . . .

Metemma. March 5th. I am feeling a bit of a worm, after ten days in bed with my old friends the boils. However, I was up and about yesterday, as the result of having quite by accident run across the *Lady Baker* Hospital Boat. Crouch, the doctor, came and slashed about the places, and has done me no end of good. If the things hang on to me — though I don't think they will—I'll go to Khartoum for a course of treatment, as I'm not keen to have a recurrence of what I had in '22. . . . I hear the defect in the *Kerreri's* boiler is not much after all—just a joint leaking; so I should have her back soon. I shall be much pleased, for this is a terrible old tub, and very uncomfy. . . .

'Rather a funny thing happened this morning: I was wandering about on land, attending to the planting of trees, and dressed in only a shirt and pair of stockings (on account of the boils) when, to my horror, a tourist boat arrived, with a Count Hunyadi and Baroness von Einem and her maid on board. They came on shore and asked what was wrong with me—evidently thought I was mad. However, to show my sanity, I walked back to the boat with them and had a chat. Naturally they offered me a seat, so—I whispered in the lady's ear! It rather amused her. She did not speak much English! . . . I have just been issuing famine relief

grain to the Nuers, who are getting slightly hungry. They are all very peaceful, I am glad to say, and there are now only just individual rows. One silly idiot stole three of the Government's cows last night, and he's got half the countryside after him to-day. . . . I am to go before a medical board on the 20th for pension. It will be amusing if I still have these boils! . . . I have just applied for 125,000 lbs. of cotton seed for planting during the rainy season. . . . I'm on my way to Shambe now to pick up sixty boys whom I am sending to the C.M.S. Mission at Malek. That should make them think a bit, as they never seem to have more than a dozen boys all told. However, they keep worrying us for boys, and now they're going to get them. . . . I have been out most of the morning getting in big blocks of stone for yet another of my landing-places. I am now building eight Posts on the river, which have to be ready by the end of the rainy season so as to get out the big supplies of cotton that I am expecting. It is a tremendous job, as all have to be built out into the river. I can't be on the spot to see the men working, so am leaving everything in the hands of the people, and must trust that they won't make a mess of things. Khartoum sent me down twenty-one young trees the other day, and only charged me £1 to cover expense of cartage—very good of them. I'm planting them on the new landing stages, which should look quite nice in a few years' time. If you can send me any seeds of flowers that multiply rapidly I'd like to have them to chuck down along the roads, and near stations. . . .

'S.G.S. *Metemma*. March 6th. To start with, I must tell you the good news: Both Garluark and Madi have surrendered, and are now prisoners. What do you think of that! I must say I have the most astonishing luck. Khartoum should not refuse me a Province after that. . . . You should see the whole countryside now. I get literally mobbed with people laden with presents of ivory and bringing me cattle in every place I call at. Wheatley will be greatly pleased when he hears, for it means the turning over of a very grimy and gory sheet.

'Garluark is rather a nice young fellow, and I think I shall be able to make use of him after he's had a bit of schooling. Better to do that than to send him into banishment for ever. . . . I'm off to Bahr-el-Ghazal River now, only just to have a mere squint and then fly away again—a nuisance, but it's the very devil to fit things in. I have a big meeting of Chiefs at Hillet Nuer on the 15th, and Dr. Crouch, with the Medical Boat, is to be there too. After that I'll go to Yirrol with Kidd and have a look about there, and then down to the Aliab Dinkas. I don't think I shall see the Duke of York, as I am not likely to get to Shambe in time. . . . I went to Yirrol for a couple of nights, and was pleased with the way everything was working—an enormous improvement. . . . The Powers have not the slightest intention of ever taking the *Kerreri* away from me now that I have her so well fitted up.

The Little Ways of Big Game

The elephant's a gentleman.

RUDYARD KIPLING

'S.G.S. *Metemma*. March 10th '25. I had a letter from Struvé saying he had heard from Khartoum that they did not think the proposal to make a new Province would be approved, and that I should work under Struvé. It is not at all a surprise to me; but, of course, I'm sorry it did not go through, and I'm not quite certain what attitude to take up now. However, I can't say that it worries me very much, for I haven't the slightest intention of allowing any one to interfere in my job; and, if they try it, they can find someone else to take over from me. That would rather put them in the soup.

I've been busy lately trying to settle my Nuers down after the "bust up." Most of them are starving and have to be fed, which is a bit of a job. They are all quite good and peaceful, and I think we'll really get a move on when once they are settled. I have a lodger on board now—Gordon, who is head of the Dockyard in Khartoum—quite a useful person. He is altering the *Kerreri* a little, and is putting in new electric bell sets. He is also giving me big drums of black and white paint to smarten up my sign-posts, and numerous other things besides. Prideaux

arrives by the next Post Boat, and Kidd should be with him, if he has not taken extension of leave. We had a great meeting at Hillet Nuer the other day. No less than five steamers were tied up there at the same time—a great scrum! The place is getting quite important in a small way. I had an amusing evening dining with Count Hunyadi, a cousin of Lichtenstein's. He was very pleasant, and entertained me with some fine piano playing—such a luxury in these parts, where one never hears anything better than an old gramophone. Then another batch of tourists blew in, very much fed up with life. They had got off the boat for a shoot in my domain, and had been nearly drowned in the swamp. They were eaten to the marrow by mosquitoes, and driven nearly mad by stinging ants. Heavens! They *were* fed up! You should have heard all they thought of it.

'Lady Baker Hospital Ship. April 24th. Operated on yesterday. Same old thing—series of internal abscesses. Had 'em also in legs and left thigh. May 3rd. I am getting on splendidly. The tubes are still in, but they don't worry me. I feel a fraud coming down here when it's all practically over, but they say I was full of malaria, so it's as well to have change of air. . . . I had a wire from the Governor-General saying that the greatest credit was due to all for the Nuer War, but he wanted an assurance from me that such drastic action was necessary. . . . I haven't answered it, and don't understand what he means. He must take me for an awful fool if he thinks I'd take any action I did not consider neces-

sary. . . . I fear the Province job will not mature. The proposal has caused a fine old row, and there's a wild rumour that I've sent in my papers over it. Shaw came to me and said he'd written off to the Bishop asking him to go to the Governor-General to induce me to stop. I'm sure they all think I'm mad. As a matter of fact, I am holding back my transfer to the Civil in the hope of forcing their hands to do one or two things I want. . . . No, I don't think Garluark will start his Kujur again. His last fight put all the girls on my side—which sounds funny, but it's the girls that rule the people, and they always go off the deep end about a "warrior." They talk of me now as "their man," and the Nuer young men take a back seat. Funny creatures, Fairies!

'Civil Hospital. Khartoum, May 7th. Here I am, settled very comfortably and getting on splendidly. The *Lady Baker* got here at dawn on the 4th. An ambulance met us at the quay, and I was brought up here, where I found everything ready for me. The Matron, a dear old soul, looks after me properly, and we have great jokes together. There are also two young fairy nannies, who are cheery and have long yarns with me. The tubes are out at last, and the X-Rays show no bone trouble, so the thing is straightforward now. Footner is looking after me. He wants me to stay on until the 6th of June, as he says I shan't be healed before then; but I must go on the 21st of this month, even if I have to do the dressing myself. . . . The Governor-General has gone home, as have most of the Big Bugs. Wheatley goes in August, I hear; but he has been sent a



NUER 'FAIRIES'



NUER WARRIORS

secret telegram by the G.-G., which might be to ask him to remain on. I believe they are getting very worried about me as I've refused to be medically examined for pension. They ordered the doctors to board me, and I said "NO." I've heard nothing more, but expect I'll be tackled sooner or later about it. I'm afraid Kidd will crock up again soon. It will make things very awkward for me if he does. . . . I have Mrs. Munro, wife of the Governor of Khar-toum, coming to see me. She rang me up this morning. I met her in 1917 and liked her very much. Curious she should remember me after all these years. I had several visitors this morning, but was feeling rather wobbly, not having been up on my legs for so long. There are only two English people in the hospital besides myself; but the place is full of natives. . . .

'May 13th. I am to meet Wheatley at Kosti on my return journey. Archer is making drastic changes everywhere. How they will pan out remains to be seen. I am going out to dinner to-night with Footner. I've warned him I'll turn up in a sheet! . . . A.A.G. from War Office came to see me yesterday. The Sister allowed him five minutes' interview—they take good care of one here! . . . I've been sitting up all the morning.

'S.G.S. *Omdurman*. May 22nd. On the move south again. I left Hospital yesterday, and the boat left at 10 a.m. . . . These boils are a bother. They have broken out on my legs again, but I'm doing splendidly, and should be healed in another ten days or so. I had my medical board, and have no doubt

they passed me. I didn't ask! . . . I went to the Civil Secretary before I left, and asked to see the Governor-General's remarks on the Patrol. He showed me the original letter, which said that the number of casualties was awful, etc. It was so very unfair that the Civil Secretary refused to send the letter on to me, and the Council took the matter up and put in a strong protest. The result was that the letter was withdrawn, and replaced by one saying that the show reflected the greatest credit, etc., etc. The Council said that it was the most successful operation that had ever been carried out in the Sudan. Had the Governor-General said that at first, it would have been a nice pat on the back; but his "opening remarks" rather took the gilt off the gingerbread.

'They tell me the O.C. troops in Sudan lectured to the British troops on the show, holding it up as an ideal example of strategy and preparedness—a nice little chit for Barker and his Equatorial Troops, and also for Roberts, who ran the show. . . . I didn't touch on the subject of my Province; but the Civil Secretary said that Wheatley had been given a rise of pay, and was remaining on out here. That's excellent, so that I stay under him. I told the Civil Secretary that our great fear was that, when Wheatley went, I should be under another Governor, who might want to change my methods; and he assured me that should not worry us in the least, as they had no intention of allowing anyone to interfere with me at all, and that I should be only nominally under a Governor. No doubt what he said was true, but

they might have shown a little strength, stood up against the numerous objections, and let the thing go through. Of course it takes responsibility off my shoulders, which always has its advantages. . . . It's most frightfully hot to-day, and not a breath of air. It would almost raise a blister to put your hand on the wooden arm of the chair—the preliminary to a fine old sand-storm.

'Kerreri. June 19th. Rains are pretty heavy now, but it's cool in consequence, and I'm feeling a lot better. I've just finished distributing the cotton seed to the Nuers, and am now on my way back to Shambe to pick up more for the Aliabs. I have planted dozens of trees at the landing-places, and am now sowing the flower seeds you sent me. Wheatley was very much pleased with the landing-places.

'Yes, it's true the girls rule here up to a point, but few of them have any idea of playing the game; their code of morals is so different from ours. However, in many ways they could set us a fine example. . . . I was surprised to get from Khartoum an out-board motor and a collapsible canoe sent by one of the shops for me to try. Both were very nice; but the motor is too weak for these parts and the canoe too frail. One of our men was killed by a Nuer at Yoynyang the other day—a fellow with a grouse, who wanted to get a bit of his own back. To-day I had a meeting of truculent blighters, who had refused to work or to obey their Chief. However, after I had given them a choking off and a warning, they cleared out, laughing and singing like children.

I am anxious to see how my cotton show goes on. I have raised the best part of 100,000 lbs. of seed, which, if all goes per schedule, with no wastage or loss through bad weather, should give a yield of 2000 tons of cotton; but I really don't expect to reap more than about 500 tons. Even that would be good.

'July 5th. This is great news about Varuna! Have just written congratulations to John. . . . Everything is much as usual; and, so far, the cotton planting and distribution have gone on better than I expected. The Talodi Dinkas and Bul Nuers will not plant, which is sad; but they are not to be blamed, for their country is far from the river, and is all under water now. However, the seed which I put by for them has been taken by others; so it comes to the same thing, in a way. I had an exciting little lion hunt a couple of days ago. I spotted four—male, female and two cubs—close to the river; started off after them with half a dozen Nuers, and chased them about three miles before we managed to round them up. Having run most of the way, I arrived on the spot puffing like a grampus, and couldn't hold my rifle steady, with the result that I only wounded the male and female. They then moved off and we followed, to find they were sitting down on a patch of grass, waiting for us. I let fly at the old fellow, but unfortunately only hit him in the paw, and he came straight for us like a flash, while the lioness went on to another clump of grass. For some unknown reason, both barrels of my heavy gun went off at once; the shock knocked me backwards into a

pool of water; and, at the same time, His Royal Highness jumped clean over me and went after my gun-bearer, who was making himself scarce as quickly as he could. By the time I had picked myself up, the lion had stopped about 20 yards off, and was standing with his back to me, swishing his tail and growling at the Nuers. . . . Back he came to pay me another visit.

‘Unfortunately, in my fall, all my ammunition had dropped out of my pocket; so there I was, sitting down, with nothing at all in my rifle! It was really amusing, for the lion halted some five yards distant, where he remained for a few seconds, and then, with a grunt, quietly strolled off. . . . I couldn’t help laughing; and, as he turned I said, “Go on, you silly old fool. Push off!” And then, hanged if he didn’t stop, take another look at me over his shoulder, and, grunting, as much as to say, “All right, old bean, I’m off,” sauntered quietly away! We followed at a safe distance till we came to a small tree, where we found, as we supposed, another lion lying down, hidden in the grass. However, it turned out to be the lioness, who had been shot through the lungs and had died. We came up with the old lion again, but I never got another shot at him, for he slipped into a thicket of papyrus grass, where I was not going after him, as he had by that time got really angry. We went back, skinned the lioness, and returned to the boat, after having had quite an exciting little shoot. . . . I am now on my way to Mongalla to see Skrine, the Governor, and settle up about taking over the Bor Dinkas. I’m heavily loaded with stone

and iron girders for the landing-stage at Hillet Nuer, which I hope to be able to make quite presentable soon. . . .

'Aug. 4th. Had a wire from Wheatley, urging me to take leave; but I have no intention of doing so, although I might go to Erkowit (the hill station near Port Sudan) when I go to Khartoum. Everything going O.K., and cotton, so far, doing very well indeed. I am just on my way back from Mongalla. Saw Barker, and am now off to meet the Acting Governor, Monteith. We then go to Mongalla to fix up something; after which I go to Khartoum. I've had another dog given to me—Bob, a big fox terrier, seven years old. I saw Harry Kidd the other day, looking fairly well in spite of the fact that he is covered with boils. I have another big cargo of trees on board, having stripped Mongalla and Bor of all the young plants I could find; so my new station should be well stocked with fruit in a couple of years' time. I managed to get the Government to cancel all the taxes for this year, on account of the people being somewhat famine-stricken. I *am* pleased about it. . . . *Kerreri*. Aug. 16th. My sick parade alone takes up much of my time in the evenings. I was at it for nearly two hours to-day, and had a few nasty cases that required butchering. One girl had no less than four large abscesses, and was in an appalling condition. She was all right this evening when I dressed her—so much so that I had difficulty in making her stay in bed. Sooner or later I shall have to get a special barge made for patients, to keep them sheltered at this time of year. I had two pneu-

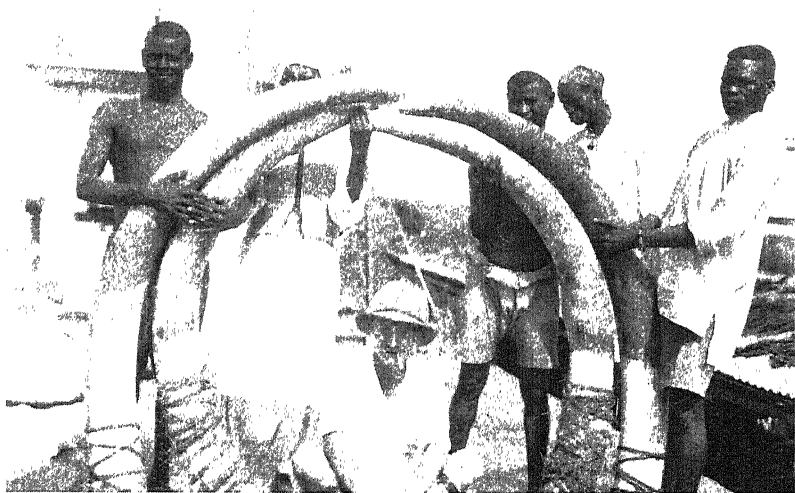
monia cases the other day; and now I have a policeman with an abscess inside his head—an almost impossible thing to cope with; but he is a little better. The Governor-General wants to come here in March, and I shall have to be on the spot then. Harry's health has been none too good, and he may have to go on leave, in which case I should wait until he came back, and then I might go earlier than anticipated. It's almost impossible to make arrangements so far ahead. The Khartoum people can do it, because they are able to go when it suits them, irrespective of their job; but we isolated people can't do that, and must work together, making things fit in. Then a great deal depends on Wheatley, with whom I have a lot to arrange. He wired the other day insisting that I should take leave; but, kind as he is, he does not understand how we are placed. I am won on my way to Ghabat-el-Arab, to pick up the Deputy Governor, Monteith, who is acting for Wheatley; then I must take him to Mongalla to see Skrine, the Governor there, with whom we have several things to fix up.

'Kerreri. Sept. 1st. You'll be surprised to hear that I am once more on the sick list, and lying in bed. It's a mere nothing—just a few bruises, the result of a bit of bad luck with the elephants. Fancy getting caught after all these years, and by my 21st or 23rd elephant! However, in spite of everything, I got the old boy, with quite good tusks, weighing 75 lbs. each. The real reason was the unfortunate necessity for having to go a bit too close in order to get a clean shot. The herd was only a small one of six,

but they took it into their heads to come straight for me. Had I not tripped up and fallen, I should have been all right; but, as it happened, I sprawled flat, straight in front of them, and had no time to get out of their way; so they went clean over me. I can't tell exactly what happened. I got a succession of most awful biffs, and was hoofed along like a damned football. The last crack left me in a sitting position, and I saw the one I had shot collapse about ten yards from me, while the remainder cleared off like smoke. I then had a look at myself, and found they had torn every stitch of clothing off me, leaving me with only my hat, boots, and the collar of my shirt! I couldn't help thinking what a weird-looking spectacle I presented; and then I started to make an inspection of myself to see if I was all there. By some miracle they had not touched the upper part of my body, but had expended all their efforts on my legs, which absolutely refused to function. So there I sat until my two "boys" appeared from somewhere and carried me into the shade. My right leg, which was swelled up like a sort of diseased sausage, had got it hardest. One elephant had put his foot straight on top of my leg, just above the ankle, and left a beautiful impression. Another left his foot-mark on the upper part of my left leg, between the knee and thigh; while five distinct kicks were made—three on the right and two on the left leg. If this hadn't happened to me, I should never have believed it possible for an elephant to tread on a person's leg and not crush it to atoms. It may be that the ground was soft, and so relieved the jar; or perhaps they did



A FALLEN GIANT



GOOD IVORY

not put their whole weight on me. However, the fact remains that it is now only three days since the thing happened, and, although my legs are still swollen, there is not the slightest pain left. It hurt a bit just at the time, but nothing very much. I think the worst part of it all was being left helpless, with neither clothing, food nor matches, and with the prospect of having to spend the night in the bush. I shot my elephant about 4 p.m., and, as soon as the boys came, at once sent one of them off to the boat for help, while my servant remained with me. The ground was damp; and, at about 5 p.m., I began to get most infernally cold.

‘With recollections of Robinson Crusoe, I got a substitute for “Friday” to cover me with leaves and grass. That, however, proved to be the worst sort of stunt possible, as ants, beetles, and every kind of biting thing began to creep all over me, to say nothing of the prickles of the elephant-grass, which are rather worse than mosquitoes. We had therefore to dispense with the fruits of that brain-wave, and hope for something better. At 6 p.m. the sun disappeared, and out came the mosquitoes—to say nothing of the cold. At 6.30, I was beginning to think seriously we were in for a night of it, when we heard a rifle shot, a signal we had agreed upon to show the relief party the way. A regular fusillade followed, and at about 7 o’clock they arrived. There was a procession of every available hand off the boat, headed by my cook, carrying a box with brandy, beer, whiskey, gin, ginger beer and soda! The others brought a native bed, mattress, pillows and a

mosquito-curtain. Needless to say, the first thing I did was to get as tight as a judge on brandy—so much so that I arrived back at the boat at 10 p.m. feeling as pleased as Punch, and as if being run over by elephants was the jolliest thing in the world. I must say those men did me very well indeed, and how they managed to carry me, on a pitch dark night, through swamps and thick bush, I do not know. The *Kerreri* kept up a succession of whistles to show them the way. . . . I was surprised to find that the *Kyber* from Wau, with the Deputy Governor, Monteith, and a doctor on board, had arrived during my absence. The doctor came and had a look at me, and seemed annoyed to find nothing wrong! They stayed with me until the following afternoon, when they left—one for Khartoum, the other for Wau. Altogether not a bad little outing, and the first accident I've had hunting elephants. Perhaps I was getting too careless, and it came as a gentle warning. Anyhow that's how I always take any little set-back, whether it concerns work or play.

'Monteith was to have come for a trip to Mongalla with me; but the fact of his boat being ten days late upset everything, and so I saw him for only these few hours. It also meant ten days of mine being almost wasted, which is sickening. Perhaps some day they will recognise the futility of trying to inspect my show. I'm afraid I let Monteith see I was not exactly pleased at being interfered with.

'Richards should be at Shambe on the 16th, and will go on to Bor, where I shall probably meet him. I do wish I had not to go to Khartoum; I just loathe

the idea; but it has to be done. Both the boat and my teeth are in need of repairs. . . . Sept. 4th. I am much better to-day, and the swelling has gone down. I've had a pair of crutches made out of old broom-handles, and caused great amusement on my maiden voyage round the room to-day. I am sending you a hair from the old elephant's tail! We are due at Hillet Nuer now. . . .

'Found everything O.K., except that the cotton is not doing so well as I expected. We did a good job of work on the landing-stage at Adok. All ironwork has at last been finished; and now the only thing I have to do is to go on filling in with earth and sand as time allows. . . . Sept. 17th. My legs are very nearly all right again now; the right knee is still a bit groggy, but tons better. Water on the knee set in, which has held it back. The news of the accident evidently caused a stir, and someone wired to the Governor-General and to Mongalla. Brock got the wind up and sent wires all over the place asking for news; but no one knew where I was, as I kept off the telegraph line. George told me that the Civil Sec. is fed up, and is going to try to get elephant shooting stopped altogether—a silly thing to do, and I shall have to go and fight about it when I get to Khartoum. It's only once in a blue moon that anyone gets caught; in fact I haven't heard of its happening before since I've been in the country. It was just a bit of bad luck. . . . We have a lot to fight against these days; this cotton show is drawing unwelcome attention to us, and we'll have a lot to put up with before we've finished.

‘The Civilians don’t like to see mere soldiers romp ahead as we are doing; but there’s one thing we can be sure of—anyone who works with us will never desert us. . . . People wonder how we get nearly everything we want. They don’t realise that we are not afraid to fight for our show; whereas most others just sit down quietly (giving no trouble to the Powers, and doing exactly what they are engaged to do), carry on and draw their pay. . . . I’m sorry you didn’t see the Governor. He told everyone I was going on leave, and wrote asking me to stay with him. It seems he doesn’t know me properly yet! I never obey any orders that I consider detrimental to my work. . . . There is such a pile of essential work to be done, quite apart from the fact of having all the outsiders trying to upset my arrangements.’

A very quaint letter, which he received at this time, has been preserved as an indication of the way in which he was regarded :

‘JUBA SCHOOL
WHITE NILE
SUDAN

‘DEAR SIR,

I am very sorry indeed to heard that the an elephant caught you at nuir. I thinking about that all the day. I heard these words in afternoon that some of the elephants run over your leg. I heard from Master Shaw and I am very sorry indeed to hear that. I think if you got slowly better and come to Malek you will be able to found us there, now we are go to Malek and we will return back to Juba on November twenty. I want ask you for something and I hear that the elephant thrown you down, and I am not happy

to hear that and I throw that letter away. And some of our school boys who seen you before they also sorry to hear about that. We are very sorry indeed now to heard that.

Goodbye Sir.

I am your respectfully
AWANG AWOU.'

The diary goes on: 'I left Kidd at Shambe yesterday, having had him and Ross on board with me for a week. We went up to Bor, inspecting cotton, and I enjoyed having them both, in spite of the fact that Kidd was in bed with fever for three days. I'm off to Hillet Nuer now, and from there shall return to Bor to fix up Richards before I start off for Khartoum. I'd give a lot to get out of that trip, but am afraid it can't be done. I was sent a most awfully nice fishing rod and tackle last mail by Wolff Murray. The M.s are very good to me. . . . *Kerreri*. Oct. 1st. Just on my way back from Bor, where I dumped Richards, having taken him from Shambe. He was inclined to be pessimistic as to what the Aliabs might do. I left my Barge with the Mamur, and 400 workmen to build a causeway about a mile long into the Aliab country, which I hope to find finished by the time I get back from Khartoum. Both Richards and the Mamur are down in the mouth, having to tackle such a formidable job; but it has to be done, and they'll find it a great deal easier than they imagine. I must say the look of the place puts one off, but it isn't half so bad as Hillet Nuer was before I tackled it. We caused a bit of disturbance at Bor on our arrival by demanding

labourers, but they had to do what they were told. . . . We should have been in Shambe by lunch time, but our paddle-wheel broke down again, and we have been the whole day repairing it. I was held up for three days by the same thing on my way to Shambe. It's a nuisance. . . . My first trial with Wolff Murray's rod was rather amusing. Having no live bait, I stuck on a lump of raw meat and dangled it along the river. After about an hour without a bite of any kind, I was going to chuck it and take in my line, when suddenly I was very nearly pulled off the top deck, and my line went flying away down the river. I thought I had at least caught a hippo, and the strain was so great I had to get two men to hold on with me. It turned out to be a big turtle, weighing 86 lbs. I could not get him near the steamer, so had to send the row-boat out, and haul him in. They managed to gaff him all right, but were very nearly upset in the effort. We had some A.r. turtle soup that night. How the tackle stood the awful strain I don't know. The hooks were bent quite out of shape. I wrote and told Wolff Murray about it, as I thought it might amuse him. . . . I shall be a couple of days at Shambe, and then go off to Khartoum. I am very unpopular out here amongst the merchant and junior official class, because I'm so strict with them. If a fellow makes a mistake, I don't take excuses; and those I employ know I won't be satisfied with less than the best work they can do. I keep them, and make them do it; so I have them under my thumb; but they don't like it. Everyone else in the country goes on the principle of getting rid of any

man who doesn't turn up trumps. I don't sack them. I hang on to all the bad hats until they jolly well learn to play the game. For instance, there was a bit of a "bust up" among the crew the other day against the "Reis," or head skipper. They threatened to leave the ship and go back to Khartoum; but I told them that would be the very last thing they'd be allowed to do, and that I would stop all transfers until they had learnt sense. That made them think a bit, and now they are working quite well without a murmur. They're just like children in some ways. One has to make oneself respected if one wants to get work done. As a race, we are far too conceited to see that the black man looks on leniency as a weakness. Sudan is a regular hotbed of fanaticism, and I shall be very much surprised indeed if, within the next ten years, we are not faced with a serious Mohammedan rising, in which the so-called uncivilized people of the South will join in against us. Mohammedanism is spreading at an extraordinary rate—a fact which remains, although some people won't admit it. The policy of our missionaries is different from that of the Mohammedans. We take into our Missions any boy we can get, irrespective of whether he has brains or not. The Mohammedans don't. They leave the children, and make a dead set at the adult who has brains and a personality, with the result that, when a row comes, they have the support of those who matter, while we are left with the weaklings. It is an interesting but rather painful problem. . . . Oct. 13th. Getting near Khartoum now. . . . The very final estimate of my cotton crop

Dak Dthul

What a man!

ROBERT BROWNING

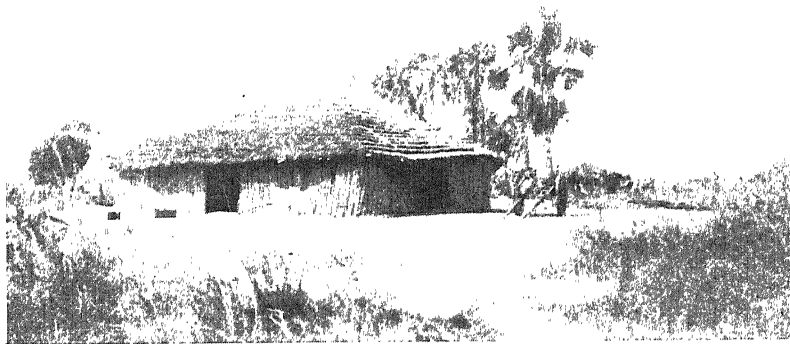
'*Kerreri*. Nov. 22nd '25. There is yet another war on. When my back was turned, an idiot called Dak Dthul, who used to be old Madi's chief songster, was nearly killed by a thunderbolt which fell among his cattle. It appears he went off his head, and endeavoured to raise the country to attack the Dinkas and oust the Government. The Chief, Madi, however, opposed him, and his first effort failed. By degrees, he managed to win about fifty young lads to join his standard, and they set out to raid the Dinkas; but, on the way, their hearts failed them owing to their small numbers, and they returned. Once again he beat his war drums and called on the people to join him, but again they refused. He cursed them, and swore that there would be bloodshed for those who resisted him. As bad luck would have it, a fool, who was brandishing a loaded rifle, let it off accidentally, killing one of his own men and wounding two others. That was enough, in the eyes of the onlookers, to prove the truth of Dak's threat; and they all joined him, setting out there and then for the Dinkas, whom they surprised at night. They killed about 20, capturing something like 40 women

and children and 2000 cattle, as well as destroying the Dinka villages. Dak excelled himself by killing two Dinka boys in cold blood and cutting them into little bits. He refused to allow his followers to take any of the captured stock, or women; and proved his madness by not only sacrificing cattle wholesale, but also by killing four of his own men.

‘One would have thought that such a succession of appalling acts would have sickened the people, but it merely served to augment Dak’s reputation; and at the present moment he is planning not only further raids on the Dinkas, but also raids on Nuers who are friendly to Government—to say nothing of the extermination of myself. It is all nothing but hot air, as the people would never dare to stand up to me again. However, I have asked for 50 troops and a machine gun, and am going off once again on the war-path, hoping to arrive at the place of attack on the 30th of December, when the moon is at its height. That little outing will not be finished until the end of January, when I shall have to retrace my steps and get things settled and quiet. After that is done, I have to deal with another problem on the Ghazal River, where the Nuers speared and killed a policeman, with the result that everyone has bunked, leaving the cotton to rot. That will only mean the imposing of a heavy fine; but it will take time to get them settled. Then the Bul Nuers have got a bit truculent, and have been threatening the Dinkas in the North, so that has to be seen to; and the last straw has been the murder of a couple of other fellows, whose friends cleared out—also

leaving their cotton. Such is the result of my visit to Khartoum. . . . Things will square up all right; but it's most awfully annoying, and will mean that I shall be trekking hard until the beginning of next rains, while the boat will be employed in moving troops and cotton, and I shan't see it for more than a few days in a month. How the cotton is going on I don't know; and we must only hope for the best. I had intended taking leave in August next, and meeting you in Switzerland for six weeks; but owing to the change of régime, and the possible alteration in administrative policy, it has been suggested that I should go to Uganda to have a look round and pick up what I can.

‘Personally, for the good of the show, I should like to do that; but the matter is being put up to the Governor-General when he comes here in March on a tour of inspection. I shall have to render a report on the various questions involved, which will be interesting. . . . If I go to Uganda, Archer, the Governor-General, will probably give me letters of introduction; and I shall get a special grant to defray expenses, so it should not cost me much. The whole business is most awkward; but it's just one of those things that can't be helped. Wheatley, who came with me from Khartoum, is very much impressed with everything, and we've both been enjoying life, although the latest troubles have somewhat upset our plans. He is wiring off to Khartoum about the troops, while I disembark at Hillet Nuer in a few days' time to put myself wise to the latest developments, pending arrival of troops. . . . If Khartoum



VERE'S HOUSE AT ADOK



ITALIAN MISSION AT YOYNYANG

refuses to sanction them, I shall have to get Police in their place, which will not be very convenient, as it will give me increased responsibility at a time when my hands will be unusually full. . . . From Tonga we took on an R.C. Priest and two Brothers, and dumped them down at Yoynyang with something like 30 tons of stuff for the erection of a Mission Station.

‘They were with us for only a couple of nights, fortunately, and are now busily occupied in getting a move on. I hope they will make good. They are certainly wonderful people to work, even though their methods are very foreign to ours, and they seem to spend all day praying. The last day they were on board, I happened to get up earlier than usual—about 5 a.m.—and found them celebrating Mass in their cabin, all dressed up in their vestments. One can’t help admiring them, although one doesn’t belong to them. . . .

‘Kidd and Richards want a lot of things. Wheatley will have to deliver the goods; but I must write out instructions for him, which takes time. . . . In a way, it’s awkward being like one great, big family, but it’s wonderful to feel you have friends who will stick to you through anything. We picked up Browne, one of our flock, at Meshra, and he has been amusing us greatly—such a pleasant fellow. Porter, our agricultural expert from Khartoum, has also caught on to our methods, although he is a very recent arrival, and I think he’ll regret having to leave here.

‘*Adok*. Dec. 9th. Your four letters from Ceylon

arrived yesterday. . . . There has been no bad effect from the elephant affair, apart from the fact that it seems to have annoyed the Civil Secretary. I hear poor Kidd is not very fit; and now he is to be taken away from me and sent to Meridi, where it is healthier. For that I am pleased, but I don't like breaking up the happy family. . . . The Governor passed through here yesterday—much pleased with everything, especially with my landing-stages and the cotton. He brought a cotton expert with him, who said the Nuer cotton was the cleanest and best he had yet seen in the Sudan; so that's one up. I sent off three tons from here by the last mail boat, have four tons waiting, and, as I write, people are coming in with more. For the first few days there was an awful rush; but that has stopped now, as it was only the earlier stuff we got then, and the main crop has not ripened yet. The people all seem very much pleased about it; but it's really amusing trying to explain to them what money is. They know that they can use it to buy cattle, beads, etc., but haven't the faintest idea of the value of it yet. The garden here is doing very well indeed. There are bananas galore, and I've just put in oranges, lemons, guavas, pomegranates, custard-apples and mulberries; so we should have quite a good supply of fruit.

‘I have my time fully occupied here seeing sick people, and have given over 200 injections since I came, which is satisfactory.

‘*Adok*. Dec. 21st. To-day news came in from the Lake Jorr area that, as I had not been there for so long, the people had thought I did not want their

cotton, and had allowed their cattle to eat it all! The cotton in the disturbed area is going west too, and my absence from Yoynyang has had a like effect. If one could only split oneself into a dozen parts one might do something. Wherever I am things go well; but, as soon as I leave, all goes phut. I often wonder how things will end. The cotton situation distresses me greatly, more especially as the cotton is said to be the cleanest and best rain-grown cotton produced in this country. No one outside understands our difficulties, and it's no good trying to explain, for such a curious situation could never be appreciated by anyone who hasn't been through it. One must just go on, grinding away. The strides already made are wonderful, in the circumstances; and one must only hope that they will continue. . . . The landing-stage here is looking lovely, and I've just finished making many more improvements. A batch of tourists off the Post Boat landed, and said what a lovely place it was, which pleased me a lot! To-morrow the troops arrive, and I start off for our new war. I'm not looking forward to it, but have no doubt good will come out of it, as it has a way of doing in such things. My latest information is not very reliable; and most absurd rumours come in. I don't think there will be any fighting, and yet one can never tell what these foolish people will do. Last night I sent out a Dinka Guide whom I had brought from Meshra, having had him given to me by the Dinka Chiefs who had suffered from Dak Dthul. He bunked and joined the "enemy," just because they promised to release a cow belonging to

him. Fool that he is, he little realises that his days are numbered at their hands! Such are the people one has to deal with. Even those who have been under Government control for years fall before the face of local witchcraft.'

Dak Dthul, against whom the Patrol was being undertaken, was a mad Nuer Kujur¹; and his rising was not so much anti-Government action as an expression of the Nuer resentment at not being allowed to raid the Dinkas. The periodical raiding of Dinkas had from time immemorial been the Nuers' chief amusement, and was a matter of very considerable business as well as pleasure. To reconcile themselves to an outlook on life which did not include it was hardly thinkable, and was therefore a cause of offence ready to the hand of a turbulent being like Dak Dthul, who had 'strong magic' to back him, and that power of suggestion which is ever a characteristic of those who lead weaker men on the road to ruin. He had at first great difficulty in persuading a sufficient number of the younger warriors to join him. But Kujur fear eventually proved too much for them; and, with their help, Dak Dthul made a sudden and abominably cruel raid on the unsuspecting Dinkas, carrying off cattle, women and children. (One speaks of the booty in the order in which its value was regarded.) And then, if proof of it were still required, the stark madness of the great Kujur became evident, for he showed as little regard for the lives of cattle as for

¹ The word Kujur is used to mean both witchcraft and an expert in witchcraft.

those of people. He had in the first instance sacrificed his own cattle as a proof of being divinely inspired and appointed to lead the warriors; and, after the raid had been successfully carried out, he sacrificed cows and bulls in numbers so large that only insanity could account for the extravagance.

In his horrible cruelties to the Dinkas themselves he went even beyond his own reputation. One lad was butchered in an unspeakably disgusting manner, and a small boy was deliberately trodden into the mud. A man like Vere Fergusson would, naturally, be infuriated by such barbarities; and many of the older Nuers and those loyal to Government, fully alive to the fact, were not slow to predict the punishment that was bound to come when Awaraquay should hear of them. Their predictions were thoroughly justified; and, in the action which followed, Dak Dthul and his following of lesser Kujurs were wiped out. All who had fought with them were heavily fined, and the captured Dinkas were duly returned to their tribe.

The result of the expedition undertaken against Dak Dthul had a tremendous effect in establishing the prestige of Awaraquay; and it was a great proof of his influence and organizing power that the majority of Nuer Chiefs showed their loyalty, and that he was able to make the imposed fines an individual rather than a tribal punishment. Capt. A. L. Norman was in command of this Patrol, which was composed of a half company of Equatorials, and entered the Nuer country from Kilwal on the Bahr-el-Ghazal River. . . . But this is outstripping the diary.

'Dec. 22nd. The *Kerreri* came in this morning bringing the troops, 50 rifles, a machine gun and 230 carriers, so I have my work cut out fixing things up. To-morrow I shall be busy making all the numerous arrangements that have to be seen through. It's rather a rush, but I have no doubt we can manage. Norman, who is in charge of the troops, is a topping fellow, and I don't foresee any difficulties at all. Everything is horribly upside down, boxes strewn about everywhere, the place littered with wretched carriers and soldiers who have no room to lie down; but it will only be for a few days. Then off we go—worse luck! I hate the idea of this show. In fact I'm sick of Patrols; but what can one do?

'*Goudrar*. Dec. 31st. '25. The last day of the old year. A rummy year, too, that I don't want to see repeated! As regards the Nuers, I shall be surprised if I have any more trouble with truculent Kujurs. We had our scrap on the morning of the 29th; and, just as they did last time, they put up a wonderfully brave show. We got in touch with their scouts at a place called Thoriar, and I sent a friendly Nuer out to talk to them with the idea of preventing hostilities; but it was no good. As we saw them collecting for the attack, we put up our defences, and, leaving the carriers and our loads under a suitable guard, Norman and I started out with 40 men and a machine gun to meet them. Unfortunately the country was very unfavourable as far as we were concerned, being enclosed with trees and long grass. It wasn't difficult for them to surround us, so we had to halt and form a square; and then the fun began.

They gave us a bit of a shock by opening fire on us with their old rifles at about thirty yards' range, and pretty good shooting they made too, for they knocked out one soldier, and most of the shots came uncomfortably close until we got the machine-gun going and silenced the gun-men. The spearmen kept pushing forward and dancing about like mad-men, and did not clear off until a good few of them had been blotted. They kept it up for over twenty minutes, after which we brought along our wounded men to a decent bit of open ground, and went on firing to make sure the bolters would not return. The wounded hampered our movements, and we could not move forward until we had sent them back to camp.

'We then proceeded to destroy the stronghold which had been made at the sacred place where God is supposed to have descended to Earth. We found it littered with cows that they had sacrificed, and there were numerous signs of Kujur ceremonies which had been held on all the paths in order to insure that we should be wiped out—rather interesting to see. I don't know what their losses were, but they could not have been heavy, as I don't suppose there were more than about 150 actually present at the fight, although the whole country was sitting on the fence, watching, and waiting to join in if the tables had been turned against us. An interesting fact is that, among the dead we picked up, three were leading Kujur men.

'January 12th, 1926. Some people have plucked up courage to come in to us, and from them we

learnt the good news that Dak Dthul, the leader and cause of all the trouble, had been killed. . . . Even now I'm not certain what their actual losses were, as several people are still missing; but we know that ten were killed and ten wounded—very small casualties indeed, and due entirely to our having been hemmed in, in a hollow, so that our field of fire did not extend to more than 20 yards on two faces of our square. We pushed off back to Adok as soon as we had found out all we could, for our carriers had developed 'flu, and were showing signs of pneumonia too. We arrived there on the 4th, and it was very lucky we did, as pneumonia by then had taken a good hold, and my sick parade on that day alone numbered 111. We lost five men from pneumonia before Norman and the troops left for Shambe on the 7th. Curiously enough, as we arrived at Adok, the Post Boat from Khartoum came in, and on it was a doctor who took over our wounded whom we had sent on ahead. I had a little difficulty in keeping forty of the remaining fit carriers to take me back along the same road. All implored to be allowed to go home, thinking they would die or be killed if they came with me. So far, we've been treated very well. Plenty of fresh meat, milk, native beer and local porridge has kept them in the best of spirits, so that now they have quite forgotten the bad time they had.'

The Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal wrote on the 14th of January, 1926:

'TO CAPTAIN V. H. FERGUSON, O.B.E.

I have received your various telegrams reporting the result of the Patrol against Dak Dthul. I heartily con-

gratulate you on the complete success achieved, and trust that this second lesson will be the last these people will need. The country should now settle down to an era of peace and gradual prosperity as a result of your four years' hard and unselfish labour.

M. J. WHEATLEY,
Governor, Bahr-el-Ghazal Province.'

'Jan. 15th. My mission now is not exactly a popular one. I am collecting the Dinka cattle that we captured, and am extracting fines from all those who took part in the two scraps. It is not easy to get hold of the names of those implicated, as anyone giving them away stands a good chance of getting, at least, a fine old beating as soon as my back is turned. My time is therefore spent in a tactful gathering of information, and in showing the Chiefs that plain speech is the best policy. So far, they have paid up all right; but I came on a stumbling-block to-day in learning that the cattle here have disease and so cannot be moved or touched, which will mean another visit later on. I am quite enjoying this trek on my own, with good fresh air, and no mosquitoes at night to worry me—a change indeed!

'Jan. 19th. Things are progressing quite well, and cattle are being handed over better than I dared hope. To-morrow I expect a big batch in, and then I'll drive them over the boundary to the Dinka country before moving North to rope in a few more and continue my travels. The carriers and others are having the time of their lives, with fresh meat, milk, native beer and locally grown beans. They are in danger of being overfed; but it's a jolly good thing

really, as it saves me from having to issue rations, of which I am very short. We had the local women in fits of laughter to-day, looking at their faces in my shaving-glass. There's one thing to be said—these Nuers do appreciate any attention shown to a relative. A sick boy was brought in to me a few days ago by his old mother, and I treated him as best I could with injections and dressings. That was at a place some eight miles from here. The day before yesterday the old woman brought me in some beans; yesterday she turned up with flour; and again to-day brought me beans and native beer—an old woman, mind you. Fancy her walking sixteen miles every day for that! It just shows that, primitive and head-strong as they are, they have many good traits in their character, which are worth fostering carefully.

‘Yesterday, too, I saw an old man limping in to me with great difficulty over the rough ground, so I sent out a couple of fellows to give him a hand. I gave him an injection, and then settled him down to sleep in the shade of my tent until some relatives came and took him away. To-day he sent in his daughter with flour, milk, and a goat for me. Rather pathetic really! . . . Jan. 24th. Still sitting about, waiting for cattle. So far, I've got only 200 odd, which leaves about 800 more to come in. Some job! . . . Feb. 5th. I'm still trekking, and shall be until the middle of April. Things are going on satisfactorily enough, although I've had a lot of trouble with them in the last month; but the bulk of it is over, thank goodness, and I now only look forward to leave, with you, and a great good rest.

‘It will have been two years by the time I go—too long, considering what the life is; but it’s hard to go, knowing full well there’ll be a “bust up” as soon as one’s back is turned. It makes one’s blood boil to think of the Kujur atrocities, and it’s hard to treat these men reasonably. In some ways they are absolute devils, and yet, in others, one can’t help admiring them. They had the cheek to attempt a night attack against me the other night; but I guessed what they were up to, sent my spies out, and caught them properly before they had reached within a mile of the camp. A friendly Chief harangued them, and sent them back home, feeling awful fools. Next day they paid up the fine imposed.

‘I’m afraid I don’t much mind what Headquarters think of things. After the unfair and absurd statements that were made about the last Patrol, I refused point blank to submit reports again to Headquarters, and I have not done so; but in time I’ll send a résumé of events to the Governor of my own Province. In the mean time the O.C. troops has sent in his report, and that, though purely Military, should open their eyes a bit, and should make the G.-G. in future think before he speaks. The Bul Nuers are, as far as I can make out, more or less quiet now. When Dak Dthul’s affair was on, they and the Lake Nuers on the Bahr-el-Ghazal River all downed tools, as it were, refused to obey the Chiefs, and even pinched my cattle, thinking that Dak was going to wipe us out. When the news of his defeat was known, they quickly came to heel again, returned all the stolen cattle, and, it is said, have

already collected fines to present to me. . . . No, I don't hang men for murder here; but they are tried according to native custom, and have to pay up blood money. If I started hearing murder cases by the penal code, I'd be having executions almost daily. In time it will have to come, but not yet. . . .

'Feb. 12th. I had a good reception at the last village I visited. The people turned out, danced and sang, brought food and handed over all fines I demanded—in fact were most hospitable; but I have had some trouble since with unfriendly Chiefs. . . . I gave 53 injections to-day; and have been busy all day attending to their sick. That should show them that one is out for their good. To-morrow I move on to another (I hope) friendly village, where I shall spend a few days. I must say it has been a great relief to find willing people in the midst of a pack of fools; and I intend to make them understand the difference this season by giving them famine relief gratis, and letting the turbulent lot do without it, which should make an impression in time, if nothing else will. . . . I got a present to-day of thirty eggs, and I hadn't seen one for over a month. I had four boiled on the spot; and have just made an inspiring omelette for dinner. You don't appreciate eggs until you have to do without them. . . . Feb. 13th. I moved a little further to-day, and am now only six miles off the River, which is a relief. The people, too, are more amenable here; but I had to make one lad a prisoner to-day for being too openly anti-Government. He started by being somewhat off-hand and insolent yesterday morning, and then in

the evening he refused to allow me to put my goats in his house. Needless to say, they were put there, notwithstanding his protests; but this morning he went a bit too far, refusing to give me anyone to drive them along; so he was roped in, is now sitting down, handcuffed; and will be given plenty of time to experience conviction of sin.'

The Great Good Rest

*When should I look for thee and feel thee gone?
When cry for the old comfort and find none?
Never, I know!*

ROBERT BROWNING

ON the 6th of March, Vere cabled to his mother that he had sent in his application for leave in May instead of September. He was beginning to feel very definitely that it would be impossible for him to carry on his work until the autumn without a break. If a man never has as much sleep as he wants, his efficiency is bound to be impaired; and just then there were moments when he felt that he could comfortably spend his leave in one long, uninterrupted sleep.

But he was in need of rest and comfort for his mind as well as for his body. He was suffering from disappointment as well as from overwork; and there was, as always, only one person who could give him what he wanted—one to be relied on, not only for the sympathy he was sure of, but for that quality in her which called forth the remark, 'I like your mother, she is so joyful,' from a D.C.L.I. Tommy whom he once took to see her. Many of us who knew her might have expressed the same idea in other words, praising her sense of humour, her high spirits, her readiness for laughter; but the Tommy



MRS. FERGUSSON
For whom the Journal was written

was still nearer the mark in seeing that Fruit of the Spirit which is placed in the great list between Love and Peace. Vere was in need of joy as well as rest, and she could always give it out of her own store.

The weather was spoiling his cotton; and his Nuers were giving trouble, as they seldom failed to do, in one place if not in another. He consoled himself for the evil effect of rains by the reflection that, in any case, he was getting all possible co-operation from 'our cotton fellows, Porter and Ross, who are both toppers, and are out to do their best.' Porter had promised to look after his cotton during his absence, and he congratulated himself on having such men to depend on—men who were ready to do anything for him, and who considered nothing too much trouble. The cotton, however, was only a side-show. The Nuers were the main concern, and the Nuers were the deuce. What could be done with an old villain who considered it a suitable act of homage to make him a present of a little girl of five years old, and gave the trouble of setting on foot enquiries as to whom the little girl had been stolen from? There was a certain amount of fatigue produced by being obliged to consider motives all the time, and he had to think it possible that the old villain meant well, although there might be less doubt about his compatriots who were resisting the arrest of murderers. These carried their insubordination to the extent of an attack, which profited them nothing, inasmuch as five of their number were killed and three wounded. But there was a weary satisfaction in seeing them subdued, and ready to

pay up their fine and go off unprotestingly to build a bridge on which they had hitherto refused to work.

The Bul Nuers paid a fine of 200 cows for having refused to grow cotton the year before, and there was reasonable pleasure in thinking how the District would benefit. He and another District Commissioner were using their own judgment in such matters. Funds for the District were urgently needed, and they likened getting special Government grants for necessary work to squeezing juice out of a stone.

People lacking precise knowledge remarked, 'You two fellows are marvels, managing to carry on your District so cheaply,' while, as a matter of fact, more money was being spent on it than on any other District, and with infinitely better results.

Then his medical work was going on, with exhausting effect—patients coming in, from thirty to over sixty a day. And there was the continual moving from one place to another. There was no doubt he had good reason to be very tired.

About that time his friend, Capt. Richards, had a narrow escape. He was lying asleep on his bed, which had been carried into the open for coolness, when a native crawled up and speared him. The spear would have entered his chest just over the heart if it had not been diverted by a large handkerchief packed tightly in his pyjama pocket. Apparently the native's grudge was against his own Chief, less easy to reach at the moment, and a recumbent District Commissioner offered a tempting substitute. Vere

was asked to try the case; but it was the last straw. He went on leave instead.

'I'll go straight to Montreux, and stay there until you come,' he wrote. But there was no need for him to wait. When he reached Montreux, his mother was there to meet him; and the blessed time began in which he had all he wanted.

Even with nearly four months to rest in, there was not so very much time when it had to be distributed over Switzerland, Italy, England and Ireland. And there was the acquaintance of a new brother-in-law to be made; for Varuna, the 'Little Queen,' whom he had clothed in leopard skins and decorated with rare plumage, was married now, and had brought her husband from Ceylon to meet him. Cousins and friends came out to join the party, and there was a high old time all round. Even chance acquaintances at hotels added to the general sense of well-being, and the whole leave, unlike that of two years before, was of an uninterrupted pleasantness.

It was over all too soon; and at the end of September he was back in Khartoum, where his return was acclaimed by Richards, Prideaux, Porter and others, as well as his servants and some particularly favoured merchants. The Sudan Mercantile lent him a car and driver, so that he made his excursions about the city in comfort while waiting for the *Kerreri*, which was in dry dock when he arrived, having been freshly painted within and without and looking exceedingly smart.

He knew that suggestions as to a Law examination were somewhere hanging in the air, but they

hung silently, and the Powers forbore to worry him except by a warning that there would be somewhat of a flare-up regarding administration policy if he were transferred to the Upper Nile Province. He answered, characteristically, that he didn't think there would be, as he was thoroughly convinced that the lines he was working on were the right ones, and was sure that the Government would back him when the time came to thresh the matter out. As he said this, he had the conviction that his reputation for being 'ever a fighter' was an established one, and that he would always be able to go his own way even if seriously threatened with interference. Another satisfaction added itself to this, for Dr. Crouch, the M.O. with whom he looked forward to working, met him with assurances of backing his methods in the face of opposition. . . .

'The whole of the Upper Nile is up against me, and prepared to fight me hot and strong, so as to carry out their old out-of-date ideas. Personally I'm looking forward to the fight; and I'll bet every penny I have that I'll come out on top, provided they give me a fair hearing.' . . .

The *Kerreri*, when he got on board her, was a delight, reminiscent of pleasure but lately past, with little Swiss pictures on the walls, and little wooden cows from Mürren scattered about as ornaments, new cushions looking beautiful, and all the homely comforts being appreciated by his guests. Dr. Crouch was on board, having cast in his lot with him by deciding to concentrate his attention on the Nuers, as he was—and had officially declared him-

self to be—in active agreement with Vere's policy, which he considered the only sound one as to methods that he had yet come across. They began their medical work together almost immediately, with a few cases every day, including three Arabs who had been mauled by lions. He intended taking on more medical stores at Malakal, with the proud consciousness that his receipts were over double the entire takings not only of the Central Hospital at Malakal but of the Upper Nile Province as well; which, he justly remarked, was 'not so bad for a small show.'

There had to be 'downs' to get the balance even, and in the middle of October he was disgusted to find that two of his landing-stages at Lake Jorr had been washed away, and the cotton crop, which had been looking so well up to six weeks before, when the floods came, had been swamped and almost completely ruined; but at Adok his trees had grown splendidly, and the landing-place was looking quite attractive notwithstanding that a certain amount of damage had been done to it. His Nuers had been fighting and killing each other while he was away—which was no more than might have been expected; however, it was all going to be in the day's work. He heard of other D.C.s grouching that Fergie Bey got all he wanted while they got nothing, and that Fergie always did what he wanted in spite of orders and never got choked off; but it only made him laugh, because he knew why he got and did what he wanted.

Just then he was concentrating on arranging a

programme for wet and dry weather that would enable him to have everything in perfect working order when the moment came for him to press his point with respect to administration. As if in need of comic relief, he had taken some mad people on board, who seemed to create some diversion and made a pleasing variety from the ordinary run of patients. At Shambe he picked up Kidd and Ross, glad, as usual, of their cheery companionship; and then went on to Lake Jorr to tell certain quarrelsome Chiefs what he thought about them. Presently he began to hug the idea of taking a census and eventually instituting a poll tax. There was apparently no end to the plans in his head. The diary-letter—was ever so long a letter written?—goes on again:

'Kerreri. Oct. 28th '26. I have visited all parts at last, and, as far as I can see, everything is very satisfactory, with the exception of the Bul Nuers, who are undoubtedly asking for trouble. The other rows fizzled out on my arrival, and the people are doing very well indeed. When the Governor was in Khartoum, they told him that I would have to change my ideas; and his reply was that such a remark only showed how little they knew me, as nothing in the world would make me change a policy which I had proved correct, and that I would undoubtedly refer the matter to the Governor-General before altering anything or resigning my post. It amuses me greatly. Another District Commissioner, who had taken up my position of doing as I thought fit without asking permission, got a good old rap over the knuckles for it! . . . However, I shall be in Malakal

myself on the 4th with the sick, and I dare say I'll be roped in for a conference if Willis is there. . . . I've had a good few rows with the Merchants and the Overseer of the Wood station, with the result that I've chucked them both out and closed their shops down. The Chiefs at Wadjarkh, too, came in for a bit of my mind over a murder case; and I have two culprits in chains on the top deck now. . . . Medicine work goes on as usual. I've seen over 500 patients this month, and have fourteen stretcher cases for Hospital, which is an improvement on last year, when I found it hard to get anyone to go into Hospital at all.

I am now getting my things ready for trek, and shall be heartily glad when it's all over. . . . I've just called in at Wadjarkh, and have roped in another prisoner; also a fellow who has been chewed up by a leopard. Curious mixture of jobs one has to do! I find it hard to show a smiling face to everything when, most of the day, one has to be strafing like the devil in order to get anything done properly. However, leniency here is taken as a sign of weakness, and is therefore absolutely fatal. We are now on the move again, and shall be at Yoynyang tomorrow. All the Chiefs and headmen are coming in to see me, and there will be a good batch of sick too. My present programme of work will keep me trekking continually until the 30th of June. I start off on the 8th of next month, and shall see practically nothing of the *Kerreri* until I have finished—except when visiting it about once a month to pick up fresh stores. Naturally I shall do my level best to get

through, as I am keen to give the Governor a fitting text for his sermon before he clears out for good.

'Yoynyang. Oct. 29th. Great Scot! I haven't half had a day of it to-day. I started off at 6 a.m. attending to the in-patients, and got them polished off before breakfast—all doing well, except one poor old fellow who, I fear, won't last till I get him to Hospital. His tummy is blown out like a balloon, and as hard as a stone, I've just given him an injection of morphia, which should get him some sleep. After breakfast the rush began, and I was busy until a quarter to two, with 106 patients, 65 of whom had injections of one sort or another. I'm seriously thinking they will have to give me a doctor of my own soon. After lunch I was busy with the Chiefs until dark, when we closed down until to-morrow. Having finished off my accounts, I am now resting and writing to you. It makes me smile when I think of Khartoum suggesting that I should work for Law Exams!

I went and saw X in Malakal the other day, and found things rather strained on my arrival. I sat in his office from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., talking shop, and at the end he acknowledged he had bitten off more than he could chew. His one crow over me was that my people were not taxed; but, when I told him I would have them on a poll tax by 1928, his face dropped. It means having to take a census this dry weather—a tremendous job; but I'll do my utmost to see it through. He made all sorts of objections against it; but, as it is the most advanced form of taxation that is known in Africa, he could not keep

it up; and, in the end, gave in. But he told me that, if I introduced it, Khartoum would immediately want him to do the same with the rest of his Province, which, he admitted, could not be managed. I said I was sorry, but I could not possibly hold back my people because his people were less advanced; and I begged that he would come and inspect my District, so that he might see for himself that what I said was true. But—not he! The Medical policy he would not entertain; and there again we differed, for I said I was strongly in favour of it, and, as the Medical Officer had decided to try his plan amongst my people, we could judge by results whether it were possible or not. In short, I left him very ill at ease; and what the outcome will be I don't know; but he hasn't a leg to stand on to down my methods, and, if he makes the attempt, he will undoubtedly go to the wall. They were all very polite and nice to me, although there were many pin-pricks about my "palatial boat," etc., of which I didn't take any notice. . . . Nov. 10th. All to-day I have been working on Thar Jath—a new Landing-place. It is rather a big undertaking, and means making a road about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long through the swamps. I have just been marking it out, and to-morrow, I shall allot portions to the various sections of the Nuers. If they do it properly, it should be a topping road. I wish I could be here to see them at it. Heavens! We have a lot to do this season—no less than four new Meshras to work on! I've taken a lot of trouble about them, and, if the people play up as they should, we ought to put up a jolly good show. . . .

'I've had a tiring day. Unfortunately the dynamo is not working, and we have run out of paraffin, so it's hot and drippy without any fans to keep us cool. Moreover, it's not pleasant to have to do everything by candle light. . . . I have another barge-load of patients. I left 13 at Malakal Hospital, and they keep rolling in. I wish the Powers would give me a doctor. My total sick returns for last month showed 765 patients. Not so bad for one month—especially as they all came in 15 days, because the rest of the month was spent travelling up from Khartoum.

'*Yal.* Nov. 21st. I started out on my trek on the 17th, and up to the present I've been very much pleased indeed with everything. The people have turned out for the census better than I expected. So far, I've recorded 1600 names; and I'm not half-way through yet. I have no Police with me at all, and the general attitude of the people is tremendously improved. The sick are turning up splendidly, and my returns this month look like showing over 1000 patients, which is very pleasing. There are any amount of applicants for admission to Hospital; and, if we go on at this rate, we shall swamp out the accommodation at Malakal, which will make them think a bit. . . . Also I've found a first class woman dresser for the Malakal Hospital, and a couple of quite promising boys to be trained as dressers. In fact it looks as if Wheatley and the Medical Officer will have a very pleasant surprise when they come round to inspect. The M.O. is going to give all my people a free course of injections for yaws—an experiment that has never before been made anywhere.

Of course its object is to wipe out the disease entirely from the whole area. If successful, it will be continued through my District; and, as I'm sure it will, I feel we are in luck's way. I have told the people about it; they are frightfully pleased, and all will turn up without any trouble. I had to ask for a Medical Assistant, as I could not cope with the work alone. He came a couple of days ago, so I have a great deal taken off my hands. If the Medical campaign is successful, it will revolutionise ideas in these parts, and will be a big leg up for my administration policy, as it's the one thing that has been declared impossible. . . . I need hardly say my idea of taking a census is being laughed at by people who don't realise that it's as easy as falling off a log if one is prepared to undertake the extra work involved. That, I'm afraid, is at the bottom of most of the trouble. There aren't many who are willing to do more than they are bound to do. . . . I wrote Harry a detailed account of my confab at Malakal, urging him to take a census too; and the good old boy is going to do it. Now I have but to get Richards to do the same, and the lid is on. The Hospital I suggested at Shambe has been sanctioned, and I have guaranteed the necessary funds for its erection so that Harry Kidd can get ahead with it.

'The Medical Officer has promised me a special boat to deal with my sick, and will erect as many base dispensaries as I want. It looks as if the Medical people have thrown in their lot with me, and are leaving the others to fend for themselves. What it will lead to I don't know. . . . The Governor is so

pleased that he says he will take the matter to Cairo if the Government do not uphold me; and I'm thinking he'll have a pretty good case if he does. The mosquitoes have been awful lately, but to-night there's hardly one, and it's really quite pleasant. These carriers and people are all dancing now, and making an awful row—the result of presents of bulls and local beer, which were piled on us to-day by the Chiefs. . . . Another thing which pleases me is that all the rifles in the hands of the natives have been surrendered. I wanted that done, because, if allowed to have them, they exterminate game too freely; and I don't wish to encourage the popularity of fire-arms in case of having them used against us in any further trouble. Unlikely; but at the same time one never can tell. I have had some experience in these things, and so can appreciate the necessity for disarming natives better than the Upper Nile people, who say they prefer their natives to retain their rifles. Such are the little differences of opinion that we have to face, and I am going to have my people disarmed before the Upper Nile can forbid me to do so.'

The blind eye to the telescope again!

'Now you can see why Khartoum considers me a somewhat troublesome Commissioner; and they're not far wrong. But I intend to do as I think right in things of which I know I am the best judge.

'To-morrow we move on early to our next place of call, where I'll have a big number of people to record—tiring work, but it's all in a good cause. Phew!—I'll be glad when August comes and I can

take a rest. I'll have had enough of it by then. . . . Nov. 29th. I finished my trek in the Nuong area, walking out with 42 patients for Hospital—and was very much pleased indeed with the show they put up. When I got to Adok, I found them as keen as mustard, and then pushed on here to Thar Jath, where I found the nearly finished landing-stage and road looking splendidly, very well done, and the people all tremendously bucked with the result. It will look lovely when it's finished. The change in the general attitude is nothing less than marvellous, and we'll romp home an easy first as far as outsiders are concerned. I'm not afraid. Next year I guarantee to treble our output of cotton, and to export 500 tons of grain as well. . . . The doctor at Malakal was grouching about being crowded out with 70 odd patients the other day, and I'm wondering what he'll say when he gets this batch. I've warned him to expect more in three weeks' time; and I'll work like the devil to get 150 in this area alone, so that, by the time I've done my trekking, they should be at their wits' end. Porter is just bubbling over with excitement about it all, and so am I. If only I can stand the extra work, we'll make the place hum properly. The final estimate of population of area I worked out at something over 4000—small, but double what I expected. I'm off on trek early to-morrow, and Porter goes to Malakal to dump the sick. .

'*Quem Toi*. Dec. 2nd. I am now in the Rangyan area of the late Chief Madi, where we had all the fighting. So far, everything has gone excellently. People have turned out well for the census; all rifles

have been handed over; outstanding cattle fines paid up; and the people themselves are *greatly* improved. I've got the names of about 60 more patients for Hospital; our sick returns too are quite good, and we should easily exceed our 1000 patients this month. It's been quite pleasant here; no mosquitoes to speak of, and therefore an agreeable change from the river. I've had only two "busts up" since I came, and they have been with headstrong lads. The Chiefs still want a great deal of teaching, but are improving wonderfully considering the circumstances; and a few more visits here should see them as good as anyone could wish. On arrival at Thar Jath, their port on the river, I found that they had made a good landing-stage and a mile of first-class road, raised and ditched and as straight as a die. I had marked it out for them when last I was here; but for such turbulent people to do it all on their own, and without any supervision, is a pretty good proof of advancement, and it pleases me greatly. Wheatley will be delighted. . . . As things are, no one can worry me much. . . . We have a long, waterless march before us to-morrow, so the carriers are busy now putting the loads ready for an early start. The route for this road to the port is a bit of a problem, as it must be $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, and it has got to be ditched all the way, so I expect it will take me a few years to do. Years are short out here, and can be compared to months at home—at least in getting a job of work done.'

Prosperity

*It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad.*

ROBERT BROWNING

‘EVERYONE is much pleased with life at present. We have plenty of meat, native beer, and abundance of grain. You remember Chief Teng?—He has turned out to be a jolly good fellow, and is no end of a help to me. By Jove, these fellows *can* walk! They’ve come something like 30 miles to-day, and look as if they had just strolled in from the next village. They are squatting down a few yards from me as I write, talking cattle business, as usual. It’s a subject of which they never tire. Our beef has all been issued, so I’ve sent for a few goats to appease their hunger. We got 34 goats and sheep to-day as payment for medical treatment. . . . I always rather smile to myself when I’m out here on my own, away from the mosquitoes. It isn’t what one would call an enticing sort of country, but it seems to suit me better than the outside world; and I think it will be some time before anyone in authority comes to taste the pleasures of it.

‘*Lake No.* Dec. 19th, 1926. I’m off on trek to-morrow, so I’m going to down tools to-night and write a line to you. . . . The work in the Madi area went off better than I expected, but not without the

deuce of a lot of rows and disturbance. However, they have surrendered all their rifles, paid their cattle fines, fixed up all outstanding disputes of any importance, and, after a great deal of bother, produced 43 sick people for Hospital. I got back to the River to find Dr. Crouch waiting for me with the *Lady Baker*. He was just bursting with joy at all the sick! After the last batch of 42 that he got, he wrote in to Khartoum and said that I must not only have a base Hospital of my own, but also a British doctor and a Hospital Ship. The Director wrote back to say he quite agreed, and wanted concrete proposals put up. So at last my work is bearing fruit—thank goodness!

‘Crouch told people at Malakal that I was the only man he found it possible to work with—at least with any likelihood of success. I fear it won’t help matters; however, any little bit of opposition only eggs me on to accomplish my ends. I hope I shan’t burst in the attempt. There are times when I feel as though I should!

‘You ought to see the crowd I have on board now: 183 goats, 46 head of cattle, 120 carriers and others. They are sleeping all over the place. My old servant is rubbing my feet as I write; it soothes one a lot. . . .

‘*Tirra Liair*. Dec. 27th. Christmas day was spent just the same as any other day, working away with renewed vigour for the good of the show.

‘On last Christmas Day I was starting off to strafe Dak Dthul; and what changes the year has made! I had a grand Christmas present in the form of Dak Dthul’s main supporter, a gentleman with

the pleasing name of Koom Toodel, who came in and gave himself up. He is a man with great influence; and I don't wonder at it, because he is about the best type of native I have ever met. Curiously enough we have become great pals, and he has promised to take over the Bul country, and guarantees satisfaction. That was a load off my mind, for it should mean the end of our wars and misunderstandings.

'I am now with the Jekaing people, who caused me so much worry last year; but now all is changed, and they're as good as gold. They have given me great receptions everywhere, have paid up all their fines without a murmur, and handed in their rifles, as well as bringing in people for Hospital. I have a big batch of Chiefs and headmen walking round with me; and they, too, show a great improvement and are thoroughly entering into the spirit of the show. In order to make the Chiefs turn out properly dressed, I've given them servants, and a supply of soap and flat irons. They now turn out as clean as new pins, and far greater dandies than myself. The idea has caught on so well that I am being pestered for servants, which I'll find it some trouble to supply; however, it is all moving in the right direction; and, if I can only get the leaders to start cleanly habits and take a pride in their turn-out, the people themselves will soon follow suit. . . . I have been making some maps of the Districts, which have worked out very well; and, by the time we are transferred, I hope to have all my books and everything else in really good order. So far, it has been useless to start anything

definite; but, with things as they are now, we can get a move on. . . . I've been looking down the list of District Commissioners, and find there are only three senior to me now, so I'm wondering what will happen when my time comes. Personally, I'd far sooner hang on to my present work, and have no inclination at all to be moved into an office at a Headquarters Station. Sitting still would never suit me. Financially, too, I am better off as I am, because, having no entertaining to do, I have fewer expenses than anyone in the country.

'It is very pleasant here now, not too hot during the day, no mosquitoes, and, curiously enough, no flies. Also the nights are very cold, and that gives one a fillip in the early mornings when we start on our day's trek. Crouch met me at Yodni before I started out, and we had a long talk about his medical campaign, which I begged him to modify. . . . The desirable thing is to wipe out disease as a whole and as soon as we can, and not fiddle about with research work on a big scale, for which there really isn't time. It's rather a difficult question. I want to help him as much as I can, and at the same time I don't want him to bite off more than he can chew.

'This month our numbers for patients have been very low, because there aren't any sick, I'm glad to say. Last month we saw over 1000, and this month won't produce more than 800. To-day four people turned up for injections, and there were 17 out-patients—a mere nothing to what we see generally. I think the new dresser he gave me is not much of a success, for I noticed several people going about

with swollen arms after injections, which is not right at all; and I think the people have been rather frightened off by it, which is awkward. The last dresser he gave me couldn't stand the work, got fever and went sick. I look forward to the day when I can train my own man—which I must do sooner or later.

'January 2nd '27. I have finished this area—nearly 9000 people; and I go off this afternoon to the boat, where I shall be for two days only, and then away into the Lake country. I'm hanging on here this morning merely to get through my correspondence, as I shall not have a moment to spare when once I get on the boat. . . . Everyone chucks in his hand after working with me for a bit. Even my new Hospital Dresser, whom I've had only since the 22nd of December, looks like death, and I'm expecting to hear he wants to go. . . . Sick numbers for last month have gone down—992 patients, 68 others admitted to Hospital. However, it is not too bad really; and I smile when I look back at my last year's returns. I wonder what our numbers will be next year!—Can't be much more, or we'll all burst.

'*Yoynyang*. Jan. 19th. I have just finished one more area—a small one, with only 3000 odd people; and I have seventy for Hospital. A few days ago 69 cured arrived back from Malakal, and you never saw anything like their excitement. They couldn't have been more grateful—although they had been, without exception, carried to Hospital by force! Their arrival created such a good impression that not only have I no more trouble to get sick people,

but I'm absolutely overwhelmed with crowds volunteering to go to Hospital for the most trivial ailments. This is very satisfactory, for it means the breaking down of another barrier to our advancement. The medical people are suffering from the strain, and Crouch wrote to say he did not know which way to turn. I wish they would hurry up and build my own Hospital. I see that the Khartoum local paper comments on the number of patients sent in by the *Kerreri*, and I expect X has by this time scratched all the hair off his head. I surprised the Mission to-day by warning them to prepare for 60 to 100 boys for their school, and that should buck them up a bit. . . . The Chiefs are all doing extraordinarily well; and, in a few years, if things continue as they are doing, we should have a really model show. It is something to boast about that, in the last week, I have been handed over 250 odd head of cattle, fines from individuals for disobeying my orders; and not a single one of these fines was imposed by me, nor even by the Big Chiefs, but by the heads of families who came up and reported all offenders. One of the prisoners, who had been arrested by a local Chief for not obeying a decision in a case, had the impertinence to bolt; and the entire population went after him, seized his cattle, took his relatives prisoners, and destroyed his house—this without any reference to me at all, for I didn't even know until to-day that the fellow had bolted. What do you think of that for a people who hate discipline?

'The Bul people have thrown in their hand completely, sent presents of ivory, brought in their sick,

and have volunteered to build roads to their villages. It all sounds too good to be true; but it just shows one how the wildest of the wild will turn up trumps when they once realise that you are out to play the game by them. I'm going to lie low and say nothing at all about it, because no one would believe me. But the sick, the cotton, and the financial returns will make people sit up and take notice. Four of my Mission boys are coming out to work as clerks for me during the Cotton Distribution season, which isn't too bad after only eighteen months at school. I am now waiting for the *Kerreri* to return from Malakal, where she has gone with sick. A few days ago I had 270 people on board for one night, and you never saw anything like the crush.

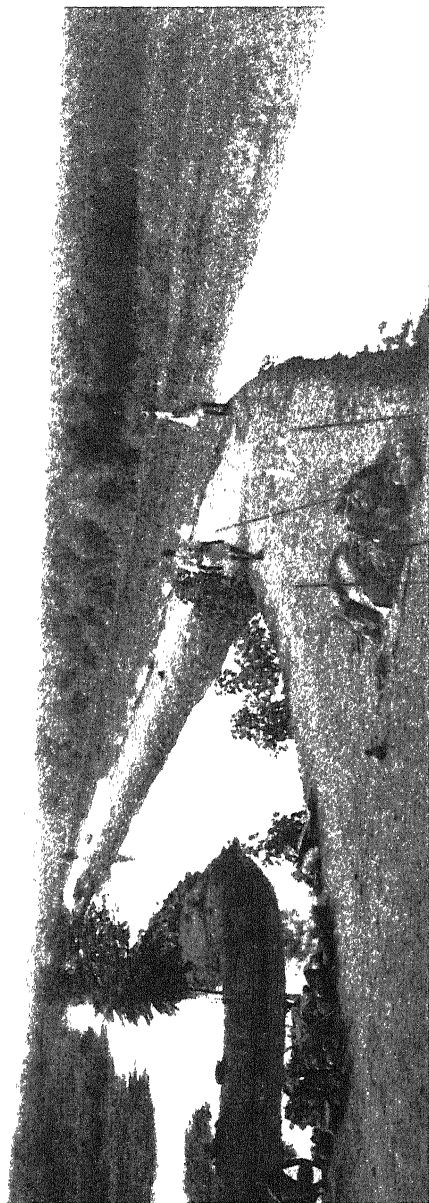
'They were sleeping everywhere. And I had 120 head of cattle on the Barge too. Fortunately it was only for one night; not a very restful one, with sick children screaming, and people talking the whole time.

'The Merchants did a good trade, as I bought up all the blankets and mosquito nets they had; and those who could not be provided with them had to put up with empty cotton sacks to keep out the cold during the chilly hours. The boat should be in tomorrow.... There will doubtless be a lot of cured to send back. All have to be fed too, which is a serious problem, as grain is scarce. The number of bulls I've killed lately is enormous. If one had to run a show like this on strictly Government lines one could never carry on at all; and the first person

who pokes his nose into my accounts will get the shock of his life! . . . I'm so busy that no one hears from me now, except you; and I haven't time even to send in reports to people at Headquarters, who, however, have learnt never to expect any. These days I breakfast at 6 a.m., and work with only a stop for meals until dark, when I have dinner, and work again at my books until 10 or 11 p.m.

'As I say, others could not stand it, and I suppose that's why they think me mad. However, for this year I must go at it tooth and nail without stopping, so as to strengthen my position before my transfer in 1928. . . . Porter was at Adok the other day when the first tourist steamer arrived. I had left instructions for a dance to be held to amuse them, and it seems that my people surpassed themselves and turned out a jolly good show. The place, too, was looking well, with all my flowers in bloom; and the whole show evidently made a great impression. The Director of Agriculture was on board, and was so pleased that he raised the price of our cotton and sanctioned the building of sheds and places for filling bales.

'*Adok*. Jan. 23rd. I have had the bad luck to catch a go of eye disease from some of the sick, but I had only three bad days, during which I could not see at all—a horrible feeling. The people played up well; and by dint of continual massages and lotions I am all right now, except that one eye is still not doing much work although the pain has gone. I got here yesterday morning, found Porter full of beans, and buying cotton; and I sent off my Lake



Jorr sick on his Barge. I have been busy roping in more for Hospital. I saw 97 patients to-day, most of them for injections only. Under separate cover I sent you an account in the local paper of some compliments that have been thrown at us. Funny that Harry, Rich and I always seem to come in for such things.'

The paragraph alluded to was a report of what Sir William Himbury, Secretary of the British Cotton Growing Association, had said in the lecture he delivered at the Royal Colonial Institution:

'A large portion of this District in the Sudan is administered by three men, Richards at Bor (who was recently stabbed by a native), Kidd at Shambe and Fergusson at Hillet Nuer. All these men are practically alone, and more than once have risked their lives by wild animals or the native spear. It is a wonderful thought—these two or three men cut off from civilization by thousands of miles, and willing to serve and uphold the Flag for such little reward. They are types of the best that is in our nation, and are deserving of our praise.'

'Indeed everything is panning out wonderfully well, and I don't fear anything that people can do against my work, as there is too much to show to leave me in any danger from opposition; and, if they try to down me, they'll be in the soup themselves.'

'*Kerreri*. Feb. 3rd. I get many letters from Burdett, and am busy collecting more skins for his work. On the 27th of January I arrived at Malakal with

another load of 55 patients for Hospital, and swapped them for 90 cured ones. I hear the new Governor-General, Sir John Maffey, is so well pleased with my show that he said, if anyone tried to alter anything, I was to write to him and he would back me. The consequence is that I am being treated with consideration—so much so that I am being given one of their largest boats, which is in course of construction, and have been asked to design the cabin accommodation. That's good— isn't it?—and means that, instead of having a smaller boat than the *Kerreri*, when she's scrapped, I'll have a jolly sight bigger and better one. I'm glad to say that they apparently have no idea of promoting me, but will leave me as I am, my pay to go on as if I had been promoted, which is entirely to my liking! . . . You remember that extract I sent you last mail about Harry, Rich and myself? Well, our names were sent in to the Home Government, with the result that the Foreign Secretary wrote to Lloyd in Cairo saying how much the admirable work of the Sudan Government was appreciated, especially that done by us three. Lloyd sent it on to the Governor-General, with more complimentary remarks, which have been distributed to all Provinces. I didn't expect that; but so much the better.'

Sir William Himbury's letter to Mr. John Murray of the Foreign Office was written from The British Cotton Growing Association, The Royal Exchange, Manchester, and bears the date of December 13th, 1926:

‘DEAR MR. MURRAY,

During my recent trip, in India, Eastern Africa and the Sudan, I was immensely impressed with the work which the Government officials are doing—particularly in the southern Sudan, where men are practically cut off from civilisation, and where there is little chance other than of the occasional passer-by taking notice of their services. I have alluded to what your three District Commissioners—Richards at Bor, Kidd at Shambe, and Fergusson at Hillet Nuer—are doing in the southern Sudan, both in my official report on my return and also in a paper which I recently read before the Members of the Royal Colonial Institute. I have done this because I know that in these days not only people abroad but the majority of the populace here at home are ignorant of the wonderful service performed by the officials of our great public departments. I am sending you herewith a copy of the current number of *United Empire* which contains the paper, and have marked the paragraph referred to. I shall be pleased if you will bring the matter before the proper authorities, as I should very much like a word sent out from this side to the Governor-General, so that those who are doing their best for us may feel that the passer-by does take notice of their loyal service, and I have no doubt this will encourage them to further efforts, because I am convinced that, whilst it is necessary for a man to get a reasonable salary to live upon, this does not count for everything with the majority.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

W. HIMBURY.’

‘The Irrigation people from Malakal, who came back from their trek through my country the other day, met us at Tonga, and couldn’t say too much about the kindness of the people and the hospitable way they had been received. They said (with em-

phasis) that never had they seen such a show. This of course will go further. . . . Amongst those who came back cured from Malakal were two women who had never seen me before, and the reception they gave me was amazing. I was told the Governor said, "Fergie always does wonders; but this time he has performed miracles."

'We went back to Tonga on the 1st with Mr. and Mrs. Gillan, and were overwhelmed by the cured sick when we got in. You should have seen the Gillans' faces when men, women and children, full of joy and gratitude, threw themselves at my feet. Mrs. Gillan sat there with her eyes wide open, and she told Wheatley afterwards that she was simply amazed. . . . I wish you could have seen those cured people; the look on their faces touched me more than I can describe. It was just worship for the relief from the agony they'd been suffering for years. The funny thing was, it caused such a sensation that the two Shilluk Chiefs of the Upper Nile Province asked to be permitted to move their villages and come under me! The Governor was frightfully pleased, but of course told them it was impossible. Then we took the Gillans on the boat, and went to Yoynyang to drop the sick. They were both delighted with the boat; and, for the first time, I had all my nice frilly things out. Unfortunately Gillan has been ill the whole time with fever; and I expect when Crouch sees him he'll push him off home on sick leave. They were much pleased with my meshras on the Ghazal River, and so was Wheatley, who had not seen the new one at Yodni before.

Poor old Wheatley! He's so pleased with everything that he just can't drag himself away, and says he thoroughly approves the lines on which I am working. . . . I knew we'd win; but I never thought we'd romp home as we're doing. . . . The curious thing is that everyone plays the game so well, especially the Chiefs, who are so keen that I've got to keep a restraining hand on them now rather than force them forward. I really think the Medical work has put on the finishing touches. My sick returns this month show 1241 patients, and 145 to Hospital. . . . It's great news, isn't it? There's nothing like being a fighter!

Thurmum. Feb. 16th. Here I am in the midst of our intensive Medical campaign with Crouch. We keep up our reputation, thank goodness, and everything is going excellently. The people have turned out very well indeed, and the work has been so heavy that we've had to stop our activities for a day to rest. We started one morning early, and inspected and injected 919 patients in one day. We didn't have a single meal the whole day long, except a cup of tea at 4 p.m.; and, when it got dark, I fixed up my two big petrol lamps in the operating tent, and we carried on till we had finished at 9 p.m. It very nearly finished us. Our other daily attendances have been 500 to 600, which keep us pretty busy, as you can imagine. I must say it's a fine sight to see them all coming in and lining up under their headmen; and Crouch is overjoyed at such a show. I think there were only about fifty people missing out of the whole area, and they were mostly women in

childbed. I'm very proud of them all. Crouch says he has never seen such a fit lot of people before, which is good to hear; and the percentage of those suffering from yaws is very small.

'I have now arranged for each headman to have his own medical dresser, so that, in a year or two, we should have a model show going. In addition to our other work, we are now training 28 boys as dressers for this purpose. . . . We have finished our first round, and have got through nearly 4000 patients since we started on the 10th. Crouch is going to do one more round, and will then leave me to finish off the last alone. When that's done, I shall move on to the Bul people. I've just had a letter from Gillan, which I enclose.'

It was written on board the *Kerreri*, and part of it ran:

'Our trip is nearly over. I shan't say that literally it has saved my life, but it has certainly been a more pleasant way of being ill and convalescing than I ever expected to experience in the Sudan, and I can't tell you how grateful I am for all your care and kindness to me. It certainly set me on my feet quicker than any other treatment could have done. The last few days I am really quite fit again, and can't pretend to be an interesting invalid any longer. . . . It has also been an interesting trip from the official point of view, seeing your type of people and your methods of dealing with them. . . . I'm extraordinarily impressed by the results. It really is a remarkable achievement. . . .'

'I also had a note from Wheatley, saying that he

has put Harry in for an M.B.E., of which I am very glad. I saw Porter a day or two ago, and he told me of his meeting with the Director Agricultural Department, who told him that our cotton was better than any grown in the south, and was as good if not better than the Gezira cotton of the North. He was apparently much impressed with everything, and promised Porter a good boat of his own. It seems that our show was the only one giving evidence of steady development. . . . Feb. 17th. Mail just in. . . . Yes, perhaps I'll want a rest when I've finished all my work; but it's different this year; all is going so well that one doesn't notice the lag of the thing. Everybody who comes in contact with one is infected with the spirit of optimism; and so it goes on.

'To-day I had a letter from an Engineer of one of our steamers, whom I don't remember ever having seen in my life. He was leaving the country, he said, and just wrote to send his parting blessing to "a damned good show." Rather nice of him, whoever he is. I shan't be able to manage a leave until May 1928. I want to trek during the rains in order to ensure a good cotton output, and build bridges over rivers which hamper our work enormously now . . .

'*Kerreri*. March 3rd. Here I am, back on the boat again. Crouch left me on the 24th, and by the 27th I had squared up all outstanding cases; so I went down the river and pushed off to Shambe, where I arrived on the 28th. There I found Harry and Ross waiting to see me, and during the day Crouch arrived, also Commander Yates. We had a great

time with my masks, and Crouch kept us in fits of laughter.

'Harry wasn't looking at all well, sort of tired out, though he did his best to be cheery. He took me out for a spin in his car along his new road—a really fine one—the Old Roman Road sort of touch! I only hope he will be able to carry out his original plan, and bring it straight through the whole of his District. If he does, and can keep it in good repair, it will be a great piece of work. I hadn't really any work to do with him, but it was nice seeing him.

'I was glad to see Yates, who pointed out to me that the original promise of the Head of the Railways and Steamers Department to give me a certain new large boat was out of the question, as the boat had already been designed and made, and therefore could not be altered to suit my requirements. However, he went one better, and said he'd give me the same sized boat, but run on oil and not on wood, and would put in more improvements. It was interesting, because he was then testing the first oil-driven boat they had, and exactly the kind he proposed giving me. The only drawback was that many alterations had to be made in the engine before it was perfected, so that it might be some time before I got it; but I should at any rate have the first one going—all very satisfactory. . . . I asked also for a new pattern iron-decked barge to replace the old out-of-date wooden-decker I had; and he said he'd do that too. I got to Adok this morning, and found it looking very nice, with all the flowers out

in full bloom. Adok is the best of all the landing-places.

‘The Thar Jath landing-place was child’s play compared with the one I hope to make at Lake Jorr this year. I had a look at it a few days ago, and it’s an almost impossible job—about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles through five feet of water. I doubt if I’ll get it done in one year. I could, if there were any earth, but there isn’t. . . . Don’t worry about my loneliness. I’d far sooner be alone than have anyone with me, because now I stick to a regular routine of work, which suits me; whereas, when visitors turn up, it means that a great deal is left undone that should be done, and then there is more work than ever after they have gone. . . . As to the rifles: I did not give them a reason for the order to hand them in, except that I wanted them! . . . I had a long talk with Crouch, and told him I was dead against dressers from foreign tribes working independently, because no black man, taken from the supervision of a white man, can either keep straight or keep clean; and fortunately he agreed with me, so we are training our own, and each family is to have his own locally established boy to look after those under him. . . . At Shambe Harry got him two “lady helps,” and I have one of my own—a funny looking old trout, but, so far, she seems all right. . . . The disease known as Yaws is most difficult to deal with. If it were only contracted by contact with a man or woman, it would not be so bad, because one can easily spot and pick out such cases; but it can be carried by flies alighting on an open sore and then

sitting on someone else: or even by touching food they may pass it on. That's why Crouch wanted to start his intensive campaign and inject everyone so as to prevent the primary stage of infection. . . . We have been giving N.A.B. for it all along. . . . Having inspected all the people, treated those infected, and then having trained local dressers for all families to keep any open sores covered up and free from flies, we should practically wipe out the disease in a few years. Even the work I have been doing for the past six years has had wonderful results, and Crouch says he has never in his experience seen such a fit lot of people. Yaws itself is a sore that starts in a sort of crescent shape, like the sole of a dog's paw to look at; then it suppurates and turns into an ulcer, which becomes larger and larger until the skin tissue, after a few years, becomes destroyed, with the result that it will never heal without grafting, and is a constant cause of infection. One finds people with from one to a dozen of the sores all over them; and I've seen really bad cases, when the patients are almost completely covered with sores from head to foot, and all the hair comes off the head and leaves the scalp absolutely red raw. Until you've seen such cases, you have no idea of what suffering one relieves; and it would do many at home (and out here too, as far as that goes) a great deal of good to see into the abyss of life. We are in a world of "things as they are," and only those who live in such a part of it as this can really understand how elastic God's commandments were meant to be, and appreciate the chances for good ignored



DOCTOR AND NURSE
(Capt. Crouch and Dolly, the Dresser)



by orthodoxy. I am afraid I have no use for Missionaries of any religion; they are all so ignorant of their own job. Most of them do their best according to their lights.'

God knows.

It was no lack of religious feeling that prompted this remark. Vere's own nature was deeply religious; and, although he was, as he had been brought up to be, a devout Anglican, life had given him a breadth and tolerance which are the seldom acknowledged requisites for improving 'the heathen in his blindness'; and he found himself frequently disgusted by the narrow orthodoxies that squabbled over trifles and placed non-essentials before the 'sweet reasonableness' of the teaching given by Christ before Churches existed. God knows. That is the last word.

Among the Bul Nuers

*Lightly answered the Colonel's son: 'Do good to bird and beast,
But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.'*

RUDYARD KIPLING

IN the middle of March, Vere tried to get into the country of the Bul Nuers by water, but found it impossible, as the Khor (channel) he intended to use was so blocked with grass that no boat could get through it. He recognized the fact that the Chiefs of this division of the Nuer tribe were extremely difficult to deal with, could not be regarded as subject to Government control, and might at any moment take it into their heads to give a great deal of trouble; wherefore it seemed to him that to bring them to their bearings was the duty lying nearest to his hand, so he proceeded to tackle it. Although the boat stuck and had to turn back, that did not stop him. He went through fifteen miles of swamp on foot, and at the end of it his carriers declared themselves on the point of extinction; but he told them they were mistaken, and, a sense of duty being infectious, they received his dictum unquestioningly and recovered without delay.

The sick began to come in at once, and in the course of a few days he saw and doctored well over a thousand. The Chiefs, who were feeling robust

and in no need of medical attention, were another matter.

Bakkam, the hardest nut of the lot, was encountered at a bad moment; for Bakkam liked his glass—or his gourd, or whatever he drank out of—and had been gaining strength from local liquor to meet the occasion. He used the most forcible language he knew in advising Awaraquay to pack his boxes and clear out if he didn't want to be thrown out. Not wishing to be considered as foolish as his condition might make him appear, he declared himself far too clever to be caught, as others had been, by the 'foxy' ways and sweet talk of Awaraquay.

'You come here,' he said, 'without any escort, just to bluff us; but I, who am wise, know that you have four boxes full of machine guns, ready to wipe us out if we give you a chance.'

Vere was so much amused at this that he could not resist the temptation to play up to it, and asked, 'Who has been giving away my secrets?'

Then he laughed at Bakkam and pointed out his folly; and at first Bakkam was beyond even attempting not to look foolish, but at last recovered his dignity to the extent of offering to fight.

'By all means,' said Vere. 'It will give me the greatest pleasure to oblige you; but you will have to make the first hostile move, because I didn't come here to kill people, I came to cure them. All the boxes that haven't got machine guns in them are full of strong medicine. In fact the medicine took up so much room that, as well as I remember, the guns were crowded out.'

At this there was a roar of applause from all the people who had gathered round to listen, and Bakkam, sobered by the shock, slunk off into the trees without a word.

Vere went on with his business, and in less than an hour Bakkam returned with a peace-offering—two tusks of ivory and a bull. He tendered his allegiance, and apologized handsomely for what he had said—than which a man could not do more. The effect was excellent; and in a few days all outstanding blood feuds were settled and the ruling of the Bul country reorganized. The men who had been put in authority by Bakkam were deposed, hereditary leaders being put in place of them, and this step was so popular among the people that Vere found it difficult to get on with his work, so delayed was he by having to give diplomatic attention to the songs and dances in his honour.

When he went on to Jokrial in a couple of days, the Chiefs held a meeting there and were addressed by Bakkam, who told them how much pleased as well as surprised he was now that he understood the explanations of Awaraquay, who was indeed a friend and not an enemy. He advised them to forget all the false and mischievous rumours they had heard, and to realise that they were now not dealing with one of the 'Turks' of old times, but with a white man who must be regarded as Derar (=a near relation).

Nearly three hundred sick were waiting for attention, and were all successfully treated, except a couple of new-born babies, who were dying of

pneumonia, and three hopelessly advanced tubercular cases.

When the doctoring was over, he tried to teach Bakkam what his duties as a 'Government Chief' would mean, and made him understand that he was not only to give the right sort of orders but to hold himself responsible for their being obeyed.

The next thing to do was to attempt reaching those he described as 'the really bad people,' on the other side of the Nyong swamps—people who had no Chiefs and no understanding of authority even among themselves, in a district so inaccessible and out-of-the-way that it had become a haven of refuge for all the worst rogues from every section of the Nuer tribe.

It is a well-known fact that in the wilds of Africa news flies with a swiftness that passes the white man's understanding; and, before Vere could reach the country of the Bad People, they knew all about the way he had been treated by Bakkam and by Bakkam's friends at Jokrial. Although he could see that everyone—including his carriers—was trying to prevent his further progress, and although he must have known the extreme danger of the enterprise, he insisted on going through the swamps that he had been told were impassable, and on the 21st of March he reached Juclicker for the simple reason that he had made up his mind to go there.

The people among whom he then found himself had never before seen any representative of the Government, and, although the fame of Awaraquay had penetrated into their fastnesses, they wanted to

have nothing to do with him. As he approached Juclicker, people came out to look at him along the road, but they showed no friendly faces, and their remarks were anything but flattering.

'What a curious looking person is this Awaraquay!' said one; and his neighbour answered:

'Don't dare tell me that little lad is Awaraquay who has made all the Nuers afraid of him.'

'Just see me go up to him and cut off his moustache,' said another; but he didn't do it, so no one saw.

They abused, growled, muttered; and when he tried to talk to them they laughed him to scorn. However, the medicine chests were irresistible to a diseased people, and the women and children waited only for permission to present themselves as patients.

Vere took everything with his usual coolness; and, when at last they gave in to the extent of admitting their readiness to receive medical treatment, he told them to go away and make up their minds concerning his proposals, for he could not be expected to waste his time, his drugs and the money of the Government on people who were determined to flout him.

'Is it the custom here,' he asked, 'to insult a man openly while expecting him to do a kindness? Go and talk among yourselves. I have spoken.'

He broke up the meeting by calmly walking off to have his lunch; and there was a great uproar, the leaders of revolt being abused by those who desired medical treatment and considered their health more important than independence.

Later on the leaders tried to temporise, and, as before, it was suggested that matters should be decided by fighting. Again he agreed with the utmost cheerfulness, which had the usual effect of taking the wind out of their sails; and, at this point, the nearest thing they had to a prophet jumped up with the excitement of sudden inspiration and adjured them not to be fools.

‘Has not Awaraquay subdued all other Nuers?’ he asked. ‘Has not even so great a man as Madi been beaten by him? And how can we, a poor and small part of the great tribe, hope to escape extermination if we attempt to resist him? Let reason prevail!’

It prevailed in an astonishingly short time.

‘Presents of bulls appeared out of the blue, and the entire community tried to come and spit on me as a mark of respect.’

He could laugh at anything, even the sanctioned custom of loyal spitting; but he tried to compromise by allowing his hands to be licked; and, then, without further loss of time, he began to treat the sick and to make methodical lists of their cases.

It would have been an awkward country for a fight, the natural advantages being entirely with the natives, and he felt confident that it would need only a few more friendly visits to convince the Bad People that it would be to their own advantage to become Good People as a permanency. He had produced exactly the right effect to begin with, and his diary-letter tells how he followed it up.

‘March 22nd. This afternoon we saw 200 sick, which brings my total for the past six days up to

2275 patients—not so dusty for a one-man show, and a layman at that! To-morrow morning I shall continue the medical work; and, when that's done, push on to new ground.

'There is really nothing like medical work to pull one out of difficulties; and, with such a reputation as it gives, one's life is even safer than it is in London.

'*Kan.* March 23rd. Things look well here, where we found everyone very friendly, got a good reception, and were loaded up with bulls and local beer. The headmen from the last place came along with me, and we again tackled the various questions that were such a stumbling block yesterday. We came eventually to a sort of mutual accommodation agreement which will do for the present; and I hope they will stick to their side of the bargain and keep the peace. Sick rolled in, and the numbers to-day and yesterday brought us nearly up to the 3000 mark. My drugs are getting low, and I've got only enough left for another 1500 injections. I had a deputation from the neighbouring Arabs and Dinkas, asking if they could send their people to be treated too, but I had to turn them down, owing to the lack of stuff. There's a limit, too, to what one can get through. I can manage now about 400 patients a day; but, if I once let outsiders join in, I'd never get finished at all. As it is, I'm due to meet Northcote and his wife on the 31st at Ghabat-el-Arab, but I can't possibly get there before the 5th or 6th of next month at earliest. I'm afraid it looks as if the rains have started, as we had a heavy shower this afternoon,

which soaked everything and put an end to our work. I shall be glad to get back to the boat, as all my clothes seem to have given out simultaneously, as if by agreement. My stockings are in rags—so much so that I have to wear socks with them; and my shorts have rotted beyond repair. Yesterday I had to finish my trek with a handkerchief hung in front as there were no fig leaves in the neighbourhood.

‘I think the Medical people will be pleased, as I’ve got lists of the various diseases seen. The general health is splendid, and visible signs of Yaws infection are smaller than in other areas; whilst, so far, there are no signs of smallpox or meningitis, and the numbers of lepers and tubercular cases have not yet run into double figures.

‘*Rurth Deng*. March 30th. Only about another week’s work in this area, and then I’ll have finished the worst. I don’t expect we’ll see many—if any—sick to-morrow, as I’m going over old ground now. To-day our numbers for this month have reached 3559, which isn’t too bad, although I had expected more. However, the great thing is that it’s nearly done; and I shall be glad of a rest for a few days before starting on the Adok and Garluark’s area. . . . I was greatly bucked to-day when a Nuer came in and told me he’d caught a sititunga (species of deer) for the Zoo. I don’t think one has ever been in captivity before, and I only hope it will live long enough to reach Khartoum. I had just received an acknowledgment of the shoebills I sent in. . . . I hear Northcote and his wife have arrived at Ghabat-

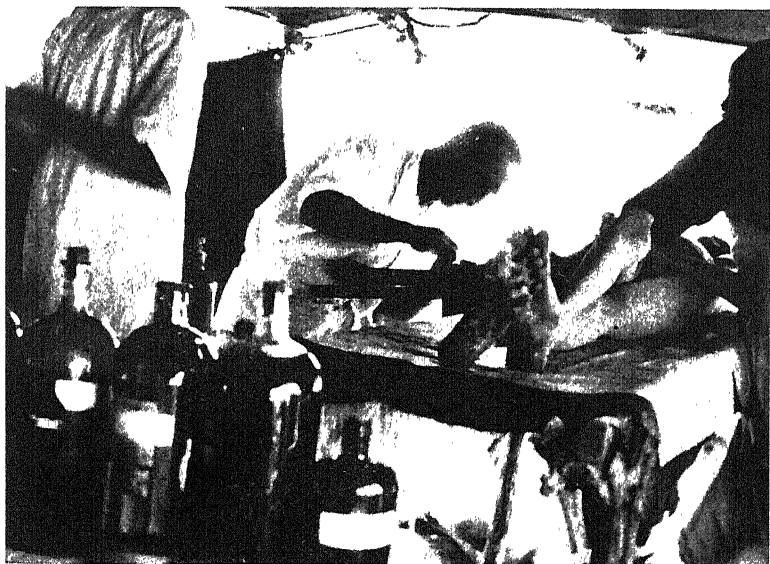
el-Arab on the *Kerreri*. I hope they won't be fed up at their host's absence. . . .

'*Ghabat-el-Arab*. April 5th. Your three long letters reached me yesterday. . . . I knew you'd be pleased with the Despatch from the Foreign Office. . . . It is very hard to write with two small girls perched on a box by my side, making me eat bananas and asking all sorts of impossible questions—a dear little pair, sisters of one of my carriers. I reached Ghabat-el-Arab yesterday, and found my Barge there, but the *Kerreri* had departed for Malakal and won't be back before the 10th, so I'm having a few days, which I can easily use in getting through all my outstanding correspondence and accounts, so that, when the boat does come, I'll have a comparatively easy time, and not one long rush to arrange things before starting off again. I pulled the two big Hospital Marquees off the barge, and am living in one of them. The other is used for the 30 odd patients I have here, awaiting transport to Malakal. I don't get out of bed till about 6.30 a.m., and after breakfast get over any work there is to do, while the carriers are employed cutting wood for the new meshra I hope to make at Lake Jorr during the rains. That's going to be a good, tough job, if ever there was one; but it has to be done.

I was surprised yesterday to hear a motor boat puffing up the river, and in blew a couple of Englishmen, who were doing a shooting trip in an uncomfortably unique sort of way. Both looked very dirty, and hadn't shaved for days. I haven't the faintest idea who they were, and was only told that



ON THE MEDICAL CAMPAIGN



they were spending some days round these parts before pushing on to East Africa. I gave them lunch, after which they went off, laden with such literature as I could provide, in exchange for which they gave me a fid of American chewing tobacco, which is most popular with my people.

'Lake No. April 15th. I arrived here on the 13th, and have been writing down the Dinkas that I have taken over from the Nuba Mountains. They are quite a decent crowd, and not so truculent as the Nuers. The day I got here I was surprised to see a couple of fellows from the Railway Survey roll in from Talodi—spying out the land to see if they could get up a railway here. I hope to goodness they won't, as I should not at all like the idea of having to cope with a big town. Unfortunately they seemed to like the place—except for the mosquitoes, which gave them a really bad time, as they hadn't brought mosquito boots with them. I saw them only at meals, as I was frightfully busy. Crouch turned up here unexpectedly yesterday, and brought photographs of our medical campaign, which I am sending to you. I was extremely sorry to hear that Count Hunyadi (who dined with me the other day at Ghabat-el-Arab) was mauled by a lion the day after leaving me, and died on his way down to Khartoum. Oddly enough, we were talking about my lion hunt; he was pulling my leg for being so careless; and, when I left, the last words I shouted to him were telling him to take care that he did not get done in himself. He was such a jolly keen sportsman that—if it isn't a crazy thing to say—I'm sure it must have

been some satisfaction to him to end his days as he did. . . . I heard from poor old Prideaux, who has been very ill with 'flu and in Hospital. . . . Crouch was rather dashed by the cold reception he got from the Finance people regarding his efforts to get funds for Hospital treatment, etc. They told him they did not approve of his methods of pressing forward medical treatment, and that it was much better to leave the people to themselves! I just wish they had said it to me. The attitude is one that ought to be shown up. . . . However, we're going to carry on just the same way, and be blowed to them! . . . I heard Sir John Maffey is to come down next month, but I don't expect I shall see him, as I'll be busy in the Adok area. The causeway leading up to the landing-stage at Yodni was looking very nice when I saw it a few days ago, and I dumped all my carriers there to get it finished off.

'I don't know that my law of averages does owe me a lot on the top side. I wish it did! However, twelve years will soon pass, and then—off we go to buy a wee shanty, miles and miles away in the wilds, where we can live with those we love, and have our animals and birds running free and not cooped up. In civilization you can't spread your wings or breathe freely as you can in the wilds. . . . The *Kerreri* has gone off to Malakal with a batch of 27 sick, and should be back to-night. I am now using Crouch's big marquees, and it is really pleasant, sitting in the cool, looking out on the lake. I'm going to keep these good tents for the rains, and Crouch is to send me more "sides" for them. More

than likely they'll end their days with me. Now that Crouch is doubling my staff, I have wiped his boat clean of drugs. . . . 20th. Just arrived at Tonga to shove off 10 head of cattle, which are supposed to be compensation for two Arabs whom the Nuers killed some time ago. . . . Everything ended up satisfactorily at Lake No, but not before there had been a row over the head Chief's refusal to patch up outstanding differences with another Chief. Bilquay, the Head, made a fool of himself by losing his temper to such an extent that he held up my work completely; so I shoved off in the boat to Yodni, picked up the carriers, and got back to Lake No early this morning to find that the people had turned against Bilquay on account of his silly conduct; and when I met him he was very quiet indeed, and ready to do all I wanted. It was lucky, for old men are not easy to convince; and, when I left, it was with lurid visions of another war. However, there won't be any need for one; so that's that. . . . 24th. I'm off on trek through the Adok area to-morrow; and I have done big work to-day, building up a platform on the landing-stage for merchandise—a great success. Also a rustic bridge is in course of construction across the canal. I have been making stone and cement foundations to-day. (The cement, by the way, I pinched from the boat!) The place is looking really lovely, and the cannas seem to be in continual bloom; the trees, too, are doing quite well in spite of the flood. The river has not yet dropped more than a few inches. The Governor-General comes down next month, I hear; but I've

had no official intimation of it. . . . I think the Upper Nile people are gradually coming round to our ideas, but I feel certain there will be trouble before we're done. There are so many admirers of our show now, and the others, who don't happen to be enthusiastic, get sick of hearing them talk about us. . . . I had a letter from Baroness von Einem, who was with Count Hunyadi when he died. She wrote very kindly, and sent me a huge supply of drugs.—Another of our supporters! . . . I am doctoring myself now, trying to get rid of those beastly boils.

Waard. May 14th. I started out into the Adok area on the 24th of April, and have been hard at it ever since. I have finished the census, which has turned out to be a bigger thing than I thought it would—9600 odd. Having finished that, I started to build an Embankment across Khor Waard, which is about 700 yards wide. I've had 500 men working on it for the last 10 days, and hope that another 5 days will see it finished. It has made a jolly good road, and the Nuers are greatly pleased, as the Khor is full of crocodiles, and any number of people and cattle have been taken by them. When it is finished, they will have only about 100 yards of deep water to ferry across in a dugout canoe, and that takes next to no time. It has been rather a triumph to get them to turn out day after day, as they have done; and it's only the fact of their realizing the advantage of the thing that induces them to do so. The prime reason is to improve communications and to allow cotton to be taken to the river. . . . Our sick return

for this month, so far, shows 1600 odd; but the cases are becoming fewer now, and I don't suppose the end of the month will show much over 2000. . . . I had a wire from the Governor-General inviting me to lunch with him at Adok on the 13th of next month. In another five days, with luck, I'll have finished here, and will then make tracks for Lake Jorr to issue cotton to Garluark's people and take a census at the same time. Then I shall have finished the entire District with the exception of the Lake No Dinkas, whom I have not yet been able to get in touch with. To-day we had a long and tiring conference with Teng, Garluark, and our neighbouring Dinka Chief, Wal Atiang. All seem to have played the game very well, and it looks as if we shall be successful in arriving at friendly relations. To start with, all three of them had sticky points on which they wouldn't give way. I came to an understanding with Wal Atiang without difficulty, but Teng and Garluark took a great deal of talking to before I could get them to give in. To-morrow we have to finish things off, and I hope the night won't produce some brain stoppage to upset matters. One can never tell what these people will do, as they have been very bitter enemies for generations, and one can hardly expect them to throw over their differences without a fight. Things, so far, have gone better than I expected. It has cost me a few quid out of my own pocket to supply presents for my people to give to Wal Atiang as a sign of friendliness, but I consider it is money well spent.

I have now 24 local boys training as Medical

Dressers, who promise very well, and I'm just waiting until I can get to the river, when I'll fix them up with whatever drugs and dressings I can scrape together. That will make 48 trained men this season, which is a good start in the right direction. It will be a bit of a job to keep them supplied with drugs. . . . Teng has just been looking in for a chat. I must say he has turned out a rattling good and staunch friend, and he behaves as if I were a child whom he felt bound to look after. We have our differences of opinion; but they are only momentary. Teng saw your letters lying on my table in front of me, and asked if they were from my mother. We have great talks together about you. If you could come here, they'd give you a great reception in their own funny way. . . . The Chiefs I brought here from the Bul Nuer and the Lake No Dinkas have been very much impressed with the friendly attitude of everyone—so unlike what they see in their own country; and I hope, when they return, they will sow the seed of better understanding between us.

'Kerreri. June 14th. The Governor-General arrived at Adok yesterday. I went on board and had breakfast with him. He is a tall, good-looking man, with a very pleasant manner. Adok was looking its best, with everything in bloom—even the red flame-trees; and I think he admired it. Not wanting him to be bothered with having to ask a thousand questions, I handed him my report, which seemed to please him, as he insisted on taking it away with him, and said he'd have extra copies made for me. He asked very few questions, and seemed to agree

with everything I said. Asked if I wanted to make a change elsewhere, I said NO. There were several points concerning the administration he inquired about, especially taxation; but he told me he wasn't going to interfere, and I was to do just as I liked. When he asked what I thought of our transfer to the Upper Nile, I told him that, personally, I dreaded it; but that, regarded administratively, it seemed the only thing to be done. I said, however, I disagreed that the Upper Nile should have the Nuers, and thought that they should be run from Mongalla in order to reduce the spread of Mohammedanism. . . . He didn't compliment me on anything; but, as he was leaving, said, "I've heard many good reports about your work, Fergusson. You have a very distinguished reputation." He didn't want to look at anything, nor, as I say, did he want to know much. It pleased me to suppose that was because he knew everything was all right.

'July 4th. Harry Kidd (who has got his M.B.E.) came up with Ross to meet me in the Ghazal River, and we had three very amusing days together. We had the three days' leave, and did nothing, for a change.' (That was what the immortal Budge and Toddy did when they were told to do what they liked.) 'They returned to Shambe by the Post Boat. . . .

'A Dr. Harris from Khartoum was here the other day and said he had not seen the Governor-General about our show here, but assured me that there would be no change at all as regards my work; and, if the Government did not grant me extra money,

the Medical people would take jolly good care to find it somewhere and see me through. He said our returns were astounding, and no Medical man would ever let us down; so that was satisfactory. I happened to have a couple of cases of double pneumonia on board when he arrived, and he seemed very much pleased at the treatment they were getting and congratulated me on the diagnosis. He little knew I'd had dozens of similar cases before! Also I had a letter from the Engineer of the Governor-General's boat, who said that the G.-G. was greatly pleased with my show and said that our display of dancing was the best they had seen. I thought it was rather bad, but if it pleased him so much the better. The G.-G. sent me a cheque for £12 odd, to be spent on my District in whatever way I liked. That was nice of him. It was the proceeds of the sale of a tusk of ivory which Garluark had presented to him.

'July 10th. I have just left Meshra-el-Rek, from where I've been talking to Wheatley on the 'phone. I went to ease his mind about the Bul Dinka fighting. Apparently the Governor of Kordofan got very much annoyed about it, and wired to Wheatley to have all his Nuers withdrawn from the borders of his Province. He also wired to Khartoum saying that he would want troops to cope with the situation, and wanted to cable his D.C. to return from leave. I never heard such a fuss about nothing, and took no notice of all his wires. I sent into Kordofan Province, got their Chiefs to come and meet my fellows, and had the whole business settled up in five minutes. The Kordofan Chiefs were frightfully pleased; and,

instead of my Nuers being withdrawn from the boundary, we've washed out the boundary altogether and made arrangements to run a mutual show with each side playing the game. I asked the Kordofan Chiefs if they would like to be administered by me, and they said they would; so I've written in, proposing that they should be transferred here!' (He had had so much to do with cattle of late years, he knew all about taking the bull by the horns.) 'It just shows you how little some people know about running a show, and I hope the Governor of Kordofan will open his eyes when he sees my Report. . . . The trouble really began last year when the Kordofan people, without reference to me, took it on their shoulders to settle the matter, gave out all sorts of absurd orders which couldn't be enforced, and so upset everything. If the Dinkas come to me, it will give me another 25,000 on to my population. Where we'll eventually stop, goodness knows. My District is already bigger than most of the Provinces. . . . Wheatley didn't say much, but seemed worried over money matters and difficulties in meeting his Province bills. I told him to send his debts to me and I'd pay up with a little surplus District money I had. He doesn't know that I've got over £700 up my sleeve, and a lot more to come in! It all comes out of fines. In ordinary Districts they get about £50 or £60 a year like this, but mine runs, roughly speaking, into £1000. Whenever Wheatley comes along and wants to see my accounts, I head him off; otherwise he'd be continually bothering me for funds, and I have heaps of important things to

do with what I collect. Funny show this, but if I don't look after my own District no one else will.' (He was constantly using money out of his own pocket for the good of his District and the 'important things' that had to be done in it.) 'I am now going off to Malakal to see the Governor, who appears to be getting rather hot and bothered about something, and wants to see Wheatley.'

High Words in High Places

'Your saying so don't make it so.'

MARK TWAIN

It was known that Major Wheatley, Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal, under whom Vere had worked for so long, intended to retire in the following year, and there was in the air that unsettled feeling which invariably accompanies a prospect of unwelcome change. The man who was to succeed him was unexceptionable; but, no matter how much he might like him personally, Vere did not intend to be one of his District Commissioners. In fact he did not want to be the D.C. of any Governor except the one he was used to. Major Wheatley had recognized his worth from the first, and was in sympathy with his ideals. The only dispute they had ever had was about Vere's using his own money so freely to spend on his Nuers; and for that 'dispute' was hardly the right word. They worked together perfectly, and it seemed too much to expect that such a condition of things could be repeated. If Vere had to change his Province, the chief thing to be considered was unhampered facility for carrying on his work in the Nuer country. Nothing else mattered very much.

All the Governors and District Commissioners knew each other, and generally had a very fair idea of what each was thinking about the other. As has already been remarked, even people with naturally good tempers are liable to become irritable in hot climates. In certain directions, Vere's job was regarded with disapproval, and there were mutterings as of distant thunder. Quite possibly a man, so abnormally energetic as Vere was, may have been subconsciously regarded as an embodied reproach to those who, while doing all they were expected to do and paid to do, did not feel called upon to risk their lives, deplete their exchequers, and leave themselves with barely time to eat and sleep for the sake of work which lay outside their actual duty. There may have been something slightly annoying in the contemplation of a man of such restless energy. Everyone knew that he wore out his interpreters, wore out his carriers, never seemed satisfied unless he was himself doing more work than was absolutely necessary, and found the game of taking his life in his hand the most pleasantly exciting that could be played. Allowances have to be made; and in making them he always set an example. It had been practically decided that he was to work in another Province, under a Governor who may be designated X, although he was by no means an unknown quantity. Major Wheatley suggested that Vere should go with him to meet X at Wau. This could not be fitted in; and, obliged to dispense with his own Governor's companionship, Vere went later on to Malakal where he visited X and two of

his District Commissioners, Wylde and Coriat. With the latter Vere had an interest in common, for Coriat was running a section of the Nuers in the Upper Nile Province.

Vere felt that the official attitude, although friendly towards himself, was definitely inimical towards what he called 'his show'; but the official talk was desultory, slipping, in an unsatisfactory way, from point to point; and at the end of the interview Vere handed in his latest report to X, as the best means of clearing up controversial matters. Vere did not see X again until that evening, when he dined with him. It struck him then that X's manner was markedly ungenial, but he never allowed himself to be depressed or impressed by social trifles, and he talked on as if noticing nothing amiss.

When the one lady present had left the room, X turned to him with the abrupt announcement that he had read the report and didn't believe a word of it.

'I shall fight it out with you to-morrow,' he said.

Vere may have, at that moment, remembered the first verse of the credo he had adopted in early life, and merely smiled.

'Really?' he said, 'I should like to know what passage in my report has upset you so much. And, as far as fighting it out goes, there's nothing I should like better, because I happen to be absolutely sure of my ground.'

X, however, then expressed a wish to get to the bottom of things.

No one wanted to stop him. Vere gave him full

opportunity next morning; and X, armed with sheaves of notes, started his first criticism. It amounted to nothing, for, when Vere emerged from the flood of words poured on him and asked for a lucid explanation, none was forthcoming. X passed on to the next criticism, and then to the next, each, as it was brought forward, being disposed of by Vere with quietness and reason. In the end X said, 'I'm sorry I misread your report.'

Then, perhaps afraid that he had conceded too much, he added, 'But I must check your statements, and have proof of them.'

'By all means,' Vere agreed. 'I'll take you with me at once; and you can speak to the Chiefs yourself and ask what questions you like. It's quite a good idea.'

It was just a little too good. X did *not* go; but he sent his D.C., Coriat, who was able to speak the Nuer language, and Vere, nothing loath, shipped him off, up the Ghazal River to Ghabat-el-Arab.

This was topping. Nothing could be better. Vere introduced Twil Ran, a lot of other headmen and influential tribesmen, and left Coriat alone with them to ask what questions he pleased.

Coriat himself had never felt inimical, and only this opportunity was needed to turn him into an enthusiast.

'Marvellous!' he exclaimed, when, having made all possible inquiries for the information of his Governor, he and Vere foregathered at feeding time. 'The whole show is perfectly marvellous. It's almost uncanny. I tell you, Fergie, I thought I was

the only person who could rule Nuers; but I don't mind admitting now that I don't know the first principles of how to set about it. Your show is ideal in every way, and I shall go back now and tell X that he must let me work under you, and on your lines. I'll tell X that we of the Upper Nile don't know how to administer; and, if he won't let me change to your ways, I'll chuck in my papers and clear out.'

Vere smiled—and Coriat went on:

'Here have I been for years and years, striving to make headway, and my show has only been getting worse and worse. *Now* I understand how to carry on. By God, Fergie, you and I will make things hum before we've finished! And, if I ever again hear anyone open his mouth against you and your show, by Jove, I'll knock his ruddy head off!'

They went back to Malakal that night, and Coriat had time to think things out on the return trip. What had struck him so much was the personal attitude of the Chiefs, who had seemed as keen on running their show as Vere himself. A man who could get them to feel like that was something quite out of usual run. You wouldn't find the match of those tame Chiefs of Fergie's anywhere else. By Jove, Fergie was worth backing! . . . It was a fine, generous mind that worked, a mind without a speck of the dust of jealousy in its remotest corner.

When they got in to Malakal, Vere sensibly decided to stay on board the boat and let Coriat go alone to see X, who was sitting out with cooling drinks, shared by the Wyldes and another guest.

Wylde hailed him with, 'Let's have it in one word. What do you think of Fergie's show?'

'Perfectly ruddy marvellous,' said Coriat, who felt the unfairness of being expected to use less than three.

'Well,' X said, when Coriat had finished, 'I have always said Fergie's was a jolly good show.'

After that, further talk would have been an anti-climax; and Coriat went back to Fergie, who was waiting, with chuckles, to hear all about it.

Next day there was another official meeting, at which X gave in all along the line and agreed to adopt Vere's methods, but wanted no advice and was quite sure that he knew exactly how to set about it, leaving Vere with the limited consolation of supposing that, whatever mistakes might be made, he at least would be allowed to do his own work without interference. He had won his fight, but something in the new atmosphere in which he found himself rather spoilt his satisfaction. Everything was going to be different. The old Bahr-el-Ghazal régime under Wheatley would be a thing of the past, and he would have to accommodate himself to expecting repetitions of what he had just experienced. To have his word doubted was something new; but, as it had happened once, it might happen again. . . . However, who cared? The only thing that mattered was to get on with his work. . . .

He had to think about writing to thank Sir William Himbury for the nice things he had said, and the outcome of that was a joint letter from Kidd, Richards and himself. Things were going on well

in the District, and nearly all the cotton had been taken away. Everyone was talking about the beauty of the landing-place at Adok, with all the cannas and flowering trees in bloom. It was said to be the loveliest spot in the Sudan; and there was satisfaction in letting one's mind dwell on how decent those Irrigation people had been, sending new trees, with a present of enamelled poles and name-plates for the landing-stages; it was so pleasant to realize that they must have remembered little things done for them and been grateful. . . . A rummy world indeed!

'July 25th. Spent a very pleasant birthday at Lake No, where I am building a new landing-stage for the Dinkas. I started off at 5.30 a.m., and got through a real good lot during the day. The place is beginning to look extremely nice. I planted fifty-five trees of various sorts, and only hope the rain will be kind and keep them alive. It seemed funny to think that a year ago we were having that very jolly birthday party at Les Avants!

'The Dinka Chiefs came in to see me to-day; but I'm sorry to say they've been making fools of themselves—excessive zeal! They put a man down and beat him, with the result that his family rose up in arms against them and killed one fellow, which served them right. I gave them a good telling-off.

'Sept. 4th. This year, so far, our cotton has done wonderfully well, and, with luck, we should have a bumper crop. 100 tons last season; and this season I think we might manage to reach 300. . . . By Jove,

the people *are* working well now! Their keenness astounds even me. Yesterday I was at Thar Jath, and sent in a message to the nearest village, 12½ miles away, to say I'd be at Thar Jath for the day. They sent back to ask me to wait, as they couldn't be in before dark. At 11.30 p.m. they arrived, singing, and driving in the cattle fines they had taken. We talked business till 2 a.m.; and then from 2 till 2.45 I was attending sick by lamp-light. When that was done, I pushed off, and they started back home in the pouring rain. Almost the same thing happened when I arrived at Lake No to-day. The Chiefs came in drenched to the skin—not that there was much between skin and rain—and left me at 8 p.m. for a six-mile walk home through the swamps. It's hard to believe that the African native could play the game as my lads do. I was talking to a fellow to-day about Coriat's visit to the District, and he remarked, "Why don't they send their Chiefs over to us to be taught how to administer? Give them to us for a week, and we'd make them see sense."—Funny to hear a poor despised Nuer talking like that! Do you know, the fines, *imposed by the Chiefs alone*, amount to nearly £2000 a year? . . . When I mentioned Crouch's work to the Governor-General he said, "You seem to think that your people warrant having money spent on them? If so, I am prepared to back you up." That was good enough for me; and, as far as I am concerned, all is well; but I fear Crouch will not get all he wants for other Districts. My medical returns for 13 local dressing stations last month showed over 1000 patients treated. That was over

and above 700 seen by me. . . . I'm just off to the Bul with 15 police to give Teg Jeark, the head Chief, a leg-up, and enforce his authority. I hope a ten days' tour with them will be sufficient.

'*Wadjarkh*. Aug. 9th. Reached Ghabat-el-Arab a couple of days ago, and found that the Bul had again let me down to the extent of 50 sacks of cotton seed which they refused to take away. I have sent off 15 Police under the care of the head Chief to ginger them up a bit.

'All goes well otherwise. They tell me there is a probability that a certain amount of the cotton seed will not be sown, as 3 lbs. of seed is too heavy on the people, owing to the late rains. In the ordinary course of events, the sowing of their grain crop is over and done with before the cotton seed has to be put in; but this year, with the late rains, the two sowings have clashed, so I fear will suffer a bit, and we shall probably get only about 200 tons.

'Kelgai, my Interpreter, has been doing a good job of work with the Lake people. I sent him out a month ago to see that they got a move on with the cotton, and gave him one of my medical dressers in order to train some more men. He came in with 15 boys who, all but two, passed the test, so that our dressing-stations have risen to 61 now. I had quite a busy day fitting them out, and it was all I could do to find tins, etc., to hold the various medicines. If any more boys come along now, I'm done! . . . You'd have laughed to see me giving the Chiefs lessons in manners to-day. Up to now no one has ever taken the trouble to thank me verbally for any-

thing I've done for them. Now, when the sick have received treatment, they have to say, "Thank you very much for the trouble you have taken." It was most amusing to hear all the patients saying it after being treated. Also the Chiefs, before leaving, came up and said, "Thank you for the advice you have given me to-day." It sounds absurd, but I think it's time they were taught manners; and making them do anything which is foreign to their ideas is education, and helps on discipline. It should impress outsiders when they come along, too; for one never expects to get thanked for anything in the Sudan. Acts of kindness are often appreciated, but just as often they are taken for a sign of weakness. I have four really bad cases of malaria on the boat now, and all have spleens. They are improving I'm glad to say, but only after hot baths and rather trying nursing. It is difficult to treat people who are so ill that they can't keep anything down.

'Aug. 15th. The Governor of Mongalla has asked me to join his show, and for many reasons I'd like to; but I think it will be wiser if I remain on here, as I'm the only one who has a native administration going, and it is a thing that the Government has been trying to do for years without success. Here I am more or less an expert, as it were; but, if once I move, I become one of the ruck and might be messed about all over the place. A spell of ease in a healthy part would be pleasant for a change. I like the boat, but don't get on with the Moham-medan crew, and they don't like me either. Recently they tried to get at some of my Nuers; but it was

reported to me, and I plumped the offenders into chains for a bit, which stopped that nonsense. Now they content themselves with grouching at me behind my back. . . .

‘Have just had news that the Lake people have had a fight with my Interpreter and Chiefs; so I’m off at once to see what has happened. It seems that they came to blows over boys to do the medical work. Great consternation here, but I’ve no doubt it will turn out to be nothing of importance. The Bul, they tell me, have run away on the approach of the Police. The Thiang people, on the other side of the river, have turned in their toes too, so it looks as if we’re in for a jolly time. We’ll see!

‘Aug. 17th. I have not heard the whole story of the Lake trouble yet, but it appears that one section refused to hand over some fines, and then attacked the Chief. My cotton man went to his assistance, and got a spear stuck through him, but not seriously. He’s doing all right. When I got to Wadjarkh, I sent out word that the offenders were to be captured and brought in. The result was that the whole countryside turned out in arms against them; so they fled, leaving some cattle and a few captives in the hands of the pursuers.

‘*Pukoor*. Aug. 24th. The Lake business finished up all right, in fact more satisfactorily than I expected. I am now going to Bentin, and will put the Police off, with Chief Twil Ran, to go and look after the Thiang, who have refused to grow cotton, and seem to be pretty uppish. I’m sorry to say that one of my cotton men in Koom Toodel’s area was

speared and killed; but, as far as I can hear, it was his own fault for interfering with cattle. The Chiefs took matters into their own hands, collected an army and went for the criminals, took all their cattle, burnt their houses and cut down their crops. Such is the way the people work now.

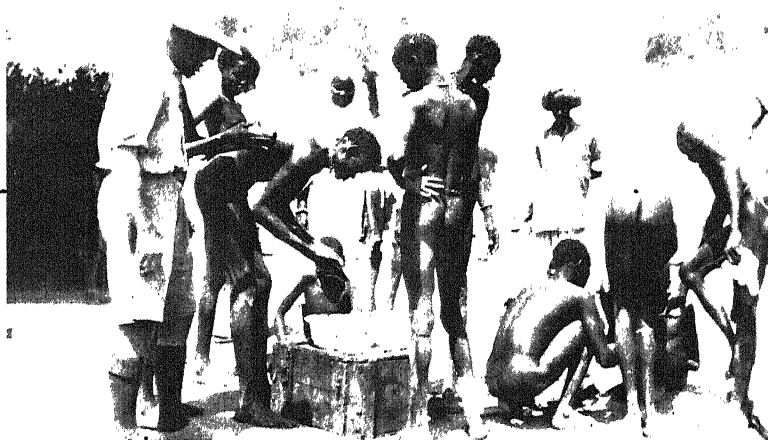
‘I am starting on trek now, and am in the Yoynyang area. A few days ago I had no less than sixteen down with fever in one day, nearly all with temperatures up to 105° ; but they are better after quinine injections. The mosquitoes are appalling on the river. Here, inland, they are better, but one is worried by beetles and bugs of all sorts.

‘When I got here yesterday afternoon, I started work checking last season’s census returns. There have been very few deaths, and the health of the people has improved astonishingly. . . . The cotton is doing well, judging from what crops I have seen; and if all the crops are in like proportion we should get about 500 tons instead of 250. Porter told me that our ginning returns were the best of the whole Sudan, and therefore we realized a better price.

‘Aug. 25th. I have had quite an amusing day, training the new medical dressers. They really were jolly good, did their bandaging well, and were not half bad at eye treatment. They were a bit clumsy at picking up how to use scissors, but got into it eventually. It’s funny how popular the medical work is now. I had more applicants for my medical class than I could accept. To-day I made them tie up all sorts of difficult places until we had the on-



AN AMUSING DAY



lookers in fits of laughter. . . . It's great to be away from the boat again; everyone is so cheery. Crouch will get a bit of a surprise when he returns to hear that we've got 93 trained dressers for him now! I think he made too heavy weather over what the G.-G. said. There is no reason why we should curtail our activities, except as regards the building of Hospitals, Hospital-Boats, etc. . . . All my interpreters are down with fever—some more carriers too, and I'm supposed to be starting off on trek again to-morrow. Moreover it's raining like the devil.

'Sept. 1st. I started at 7 a.m., checking the census returns and seeing the sick, not getting finished until 6.30 p.m., and that without a halt for meals. A bit fagging, but a nice hot bath did me no end of good. I wish you could have seen the demonstration they put up by way of thanks for the training of the local dressers. I've never done anything so popular, and the boys themselves are just bursting with enthusiasm. They got their "boxes" on the 20th of last month, and since then have seen over 600 patients. . . . It is a bit trying to have to sit down and listen to the accounts of the various complaints treated, but one has to do it. I'm sure Crouch won't believe me until he sees the show for himself! . . . Everyone is working well, and I am amazed at the way every individual has sown his cotton. The trekking during the rains has the advantage of allowing me to see all the people, because in the dry season most of the population are studded about the country in their cattle grounds. From now on I shall arrange for an

all-the-year-round series of treks, which will make the business less strenuous in the dry season, and relieve the boredom of too much boat. The difficulty of trekking in the rains is that the health of the carriers suffers considerably; so, to overcome this obstacle, I am going to get hold of some trained carrying bulls. . . . I had a terrible time with small children to-day. Fifty-four turned up for injections, and most of them were infants in arms, very few of whom have visible veins into which one can inject with ease. Those that have kick and scream so much that it's the work of the devil to do a satisfactory injection. However, out of the lot to-day, only four beat me, and had to have inter-muscular injection, which is painful and invariably forms an abscess. I've seen no bad cases at all. Everyone had primary infection, which is a great result for our last year's efforts.

'Sept. 3rd. Many sick again to-day, and more babies than ever. The adults seem to be wonderfully clear of the disease now. . . . One old man made quite a nuisance of himself to-day by hugging my legs, licking my hands and spitting on my head, because I'd made a good cure of him. . . .

'There's no doubt that, after one has done about ten years out here, one's temper gets terribly bad. I'm a great deal worse this year myself, with the result that my servants and the crew get a pretty thin time of it if I find anyone sitting down without a job of work. . . . In Africa people invariably start off with a great rush, then gradually fall into the native ways of doing things; but the climate

seems to have taken me just the other way, and so we get a great move on, though it nearly kills my interpreters! I am obliged to have three relays of interpreters to keep me going; they do two hours on and four off every day. I *shall* be glad when I'm 48 and can settle down. I only wish my term was finished, so that you and I could settle down together, but I see no way of getting out of the twelve years that have to run. . . . I went this evening to have a talk with the owner of a neighbouring house, and found him in the act of burying a child, who was being brought in to me for treatment but died on the way. The parents were in much grief; but, after the burial was over, they came and told me the whole story. I thought of you then, and how you would have sympathized with them. They wanted to give me a goat—I think just because I was sorry for their grief. . . . What hits me badly is the thought that civilization must eventually encroach on them, and ruin their fine ideals and customs. I do my very best to keep them unsoiled; but it's a hard and, I fear, hopeless fight, for even interpreters, servants, carriers and such like, whom one cannot do without, have their bad influence. Last year I had Assistant Medical Officers from Crouch to help me, but the amount of harm they did by bringing their beastly ideas in among my local hangers-on was such that I refuse to have them again. It means a great deal more work for me, but I don't care two pins so long as I can keep my people clean. . . . I wish I had made an effort to learn the language properly, as then I could have dis-

pensed with interpreters; but it's a big order. I often wish Harry Kidd were here to fight beside me, for a fight it is. However, we can but lose in the end, and it's something to have made the effort. . . .

‘Mission work one must press on; trade has to be encouraged for the good of the country in general; agricultural and medical enterprise have to be fostered; and yet, at the same time, one knows there's a certain amount of harm coming out of it all. My great aim is to get the Southern Sudan entirely cut off from the Northern Sudan, and eventually put under Uganda, so as to block out Mohammedanism, seeing that we cannot cope with the detrimental germ of that kind of civilization. I think it can be done quite well by forming a Central African State, something on the lines of Liberia. It will take years to do, but it can be done, and would meet with the approval of the Government at home because we should have the interests of the native at heart.

‘Sept. 7th. I got back to the river this morning to find that the boat had not yet arrived, so I'm sitting down on the bank in my tent. By Jove, it's hot too! —Not a breath of air, and I'm dripping, although the sun went down an hour ago. It is one of those stifling nights when one does not seem to get enough air to fill one's lungs. Last night I spent alone in my tent—the first time I've ever been without someone since I came to Africa! I had to take down the servants' tent so as to facilitate the carrying; and, as I was anxious that my boys should not be laid up with pneumonia, I sent them off to sleep

in the village. It was pleasant to be really alone, without a sound to be heard except the bellowing of some hippos in the river, and the continual barking of hyænas, which were nosing round to pick up any scraps of meat that might be lying about. . . . I was making up my census numbers last night, and I found an increase of over 300 on last year's figures, bringing us up to 8000 odd in the Wadjarkh area. . . . The death rate really has been slight; but the birth rate is a farce, as the people can't be got to speak the truth—not from devilment, but from pure modesty. It's the same with men having "Luom" wives, *i.e.*, widows who go to men they fancy to produce children in the name of their deceased husbands. . . . There's a great deal to be said for their customs, which are based entirely on nature. . . . It's too hot to write more—It's like an oven—I'm soaked with perspiration—I must try to get a breath of air outside. . . .

'Kerreri. Sept. 10th. The boat arrived just after I'd turned into bed; and it was very lucky it did, for my bed was full of sand-flies, and I was getting bitten to pieces. . . . You might like to see an extract from Wheatley's Report to Khartoum:

"Apart from general direction and advice from me, Captain Fergusson is entirely responsible for the submission and present control of the area affected, and I should be glad if you would bring his fine work to the notice of His Excellency the Governor-General—especially in view of the fact that the District is to be transferred to the Upper Nile

Province next year. In the early days particularly, when he had no steamer, he lived and worked under extremely arduous circumstances and suffered much personal hardship. On more than one occasion he incurred considerable risk to his life. I cannot speak too highly of the courage, perseverance, tact, sound judgment and devotion to duty that he has displayed. The amount of 'first aid' knowledge and skill he has acquired has enabled him to give treatment to thousands of patients, and has greatly enhanced his personal influence among these wild tribesmen."

"Things must have impressed him to call for such remarks! . . . By the same mail came a letter from Harry saying he had been to Mongalla for a change of air, and Brock had asked him to tackle me about taking over Deputy Governor to him when he gets to Wau. I don't quite know what to say. I'd like to work with him; but, on the other hand, I don't like leaving my own show at present. . . . If I were to leave here, I don't know a single person who would be willing to take over such a job, and I'm sure it would go bang. Without years of experience and practice it would be impossible for anyone to do my work. Of course I know Khartoum considers me a sort of "hopeless case"; and it is the fashion, as X showed, to regard me as a bluffer and eyewasher. In such circumstances, there is nothing one can do but carry on harder than ever on one's own lines; then, when the truth is known, as it must be some day, I can't pretend to grudge a bit of a shock to the wiseacres who persist in believing that

my enormous sick returns are cooked, and so on. What rot it all is!’

One may anticipate by saying that Vere’s work is to-day being carried on by Coriat, who did not forget his promise.

Also one may quote here an account of the medical work among the Nuers, given by Capt. H. A. Crouch, M.C., O.B.E., the Medical Inspector so often mentioned in Vere’s letters :

‘When Fergusson joined the service, the Government had but lately commenced medical work amongst the tribes of the southern Sudan. So vast was the area to be covered and so heavy the incidence of disease, it was impossible to give any one District adequate attention, with the limited supply of drugs and personnel available at the time. Fergie Bey resolved therefore to tackle the problem himself. He took every opportunity of acquiring the necessary knowledge and training which would enable him to deal with the most prevalent diseases. Armed with a supply of drugs, dressings and a few simple instruments, but with no skilled assistance, he set to work with his customary energy.

‘When one remembers that these people had never had any kind of medical treatment in the past, and that they were riddled with disease, one realises the magnitude of the task before him. Practically the entire population suffered from Yaws—a disease which, in its early stages, renders life intolerable by successive outbreaks of sores, and, later, leaves the patient, in many cases, crippled for life by horrible deformities. Fortunately there is a drug, given by

injection, which has immediate and miraculous effect in dealing with Yaws. Fergusson was able to make full use of this treatment, and very soon the glad tidings were spread from end to end of his District. No wonder, then, that wherever he went he was thronged by sufferers, desperately anxious to avail themselves of what appeared to be a certain cure; and it is easy to perceive of what enormous value this medical work must have been as an aid to administrative duties.

‘As this side of his work developed, he had less time available, and was given a native assistant to carry out the routine treatment. Even then he was always present to encourage, advise and supervise, in addition to doing the bulk of the injection work. When I came to the Province in 1924, confidence had been firmly established in the methods of treatment of the simple diseases; but there remained a vast number of conditions requiring operative and prolonged hospital treatment. It was one thing for a Nuer to come to the steamer for his medicine and return home, but quite a different proposition to take him from his native country to the hospital at Malakal to undergo operation or other treatment of which he was entirely ignorant and which he viewed with the greatest doubt and dismay.

‘Very gradually we went to work, encouraging and persuading those cases to go which we considered likely to give the best and most startling results. Great was the depression and misgiving we had to witness; and in many cases relations made their farewells without the least hope of ever seeing

the patient again. But, when once these first few cases were returned and it was known that, far from anything dreadful having happened to them, they were actually cured, then little difficulty was experienced in persuading others to follow their example.

'I well remember one occasion, when I sent back to their villages some fifty cases cured of eye deformity by operation. Enthusiasm was intense; fires were lighted; bulls were killed; and the whole population turned out, singing and dancing. Another time, when the hospital at Malakal was already full to overflowing and the "Kerreri" arrived with her decks black with patients seeking admission, the convoy was accompanied by a characteristic note from Fergie Bey: "Here are a few patients to keep your numbers up." (There were about 120!) Emergency accommodation was arranged, and two operating tables were in constant use for six hours a day for the next fortnight. I mention these instances to illustrate the force of Fergusson's personality and the infinite faith and confidence he inspired.

'In February '27 we decided that the people had reached a stage in administration when a systematic medical survey and treatment could be carried out; and the Nuong section in the Lake Jorr area, being the most advanced of the Nuers and the most amenable, was selected for the first campaign. . . . The whole area was toured three times, and the entire population marshalled in sections and families as required. It was in such circumstances that one was

best able to appreciate Fergusson's exceptional ability to organise and control the movements of large numbers of natives with the minimum of disturbance and in perfect order. His arrangements went quietly forward, and from morning until night there was never one moment's delay, nor was there any overcrowding.

'As a result of his excellent organisation, over a thousand patients were seen and treated each day, and the campaign was completed in a shorter period than we had estimated.

'It was about this time that Fergusson first conceived the idea of establishing the system of Chiefs' dressers. We had been struck with the fact that most of the chronic ulcers, blindness, and various ailments of the eye had been caused by neglect of an earlier simple complaint which could have been cured by the elementary methods of first aid. Under this system, Chiefs were now required to produce their most intelligent boys for training with the hospital unit while touring the area; and the scheme was an immediate success, the greatest enthusiasm being shown by the boys. On completion of their training, each was provided with a box of medicines and dressings, and left to carry on the practice in his own village. Returns of the sick treated were rendered by bundles of straw, the different sizes of the bundles representing men, women and children.

'On the conclusion of the work in the Lake Jorr area, I had to leave for other parts of the Province, but Fergusson carried on the campaign throughout

his District. Just before his death, he wrote enthusiastically about the results and his conviction that disease was then well under control.

‘I have since visited these areas, and have found the incidence of disease negligible or of such minor proportions as can easily be dealt with by the visiting doctor and the Chiefs’ dressers, who now number 130.’

No Compromise

I do not trouble my spirit to indicate itself or to be understood . . .

I exist as I am, that is enough.

If no other in the world be aware I sit content.

And if each and all be aware I sit content.

WALT WHITMAN

It has already been seen that a suggestion was made with regard to a Law examination, and that Vere very decidedly objected to it. Unfortunately for his peace of mind, the subject had not been allowed to drop. He was due for increased pay at the beginning of the next year, and the authorities informed him that this Law examination would be a necessary qualification for it. The argument had not yet gone far enough to raise his ire, and he merely forwarded a polite request that he might be excused from complying with the condition. He put forward as grounds for the request (1) his length of service and (2) that, under native administration, the laws of the Sudan are not in use.

Request and reasons were swept aside; and he began to feel somewhat annoyed. He discussed the matter with Major Wheatley, who, he knew, would give him a fair hearing.

‘I don’t intend to go in for exams.,’ he said. ‘I was never any good at them, and I object to making a fool of myself. I know what I can do and what I can’t do. My time is valuable. I want every minute

of it for the work I'm fit for; and I'm not going to waste it swotting over an absolutely useless subject, even if I could pass the beastly thing, which I know I couldn't.'

His Governor was, as he was trusted to be, ready to see reason, and agreed to put it as a special case before the Governor-General, but did not feel able to promise a favourable answer.

'Never mind,' said Vere; 'I don't care what they do. They'll have to make use of me if they want my native administration, so I feel safe. I'll come back into my own all right.'

He had reason to feel confident at the moment, for his last Report had been remarkably well received at Khartoum. The Civil Secretary wrote to the Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal: 'Please convey to Captain Fergusson His Excellency's great appreciation of his Report, and of the splendid progress he has made.' The Governor-General, when sending the Report to the Civil Secretary, had spoken of it as being of very great interest, and the Civil Secretary himself called it an extremely valuable document; so it was hardly to be wondered at that Vere felt he had some grounds for expecting to be treated as a special case, or that his Governor shared his opinion.

However, red tape is a cheap commodity, and there was plenty of it in Khartoum, as in cities of Europe, ready to be tied into hard knots. Every representation possible was made in his favour, but the position remained as before: no Law exam., no increase of pay.

When he was in Khartoum late in October, he went into the Civil Secretary's office and found everyone very pleasant and congratulatory. But he was not allowed to suppose that he could have things his own way. The question of the Law exam. came up; and, gently but firmly, he was told that he would have to pass it. To this he replied, with perhaps more firmness than gentleness, that he most certainly would not do so in any circumstances, and that, if his request for exemption were turned down, the only effect of official refusal would be that he would carry on at his present rate of pay.

'That,' he reported in his diary-letter, 'seemed to worry them a lot. Why, I don't know—unless they have a job in view for me. Whatever happens, I won't go up for the beastly thing, and they can do what they like about it.'

The next people he discussed it with were a fellow District Commissioner and his wife, who were intimate friends of his. The other D.C. was just then reading up for that very exam., and his wife's sense of humour was strongly appealed to when Vere told her *he* had no intention of going in for it at all, and that nothing in the world would induce him to work for such rot. That an overwhelming necessity of the kind might be disposed of in so light and airy a manner seemed to be one of the funniest ideas ever presented for her consideration; and they made merry together. But Vere meant every word he said.

Again the diary: 'It seems that more trouble will be brewing too. They have sent me a pile of legal forms to fill in for merchants' ground rent, etc. I

have no intention of doing it. If I once allowed them to begin planting rubbish on me, I should have the life worried out of me in future, so it's better to make them understand from the first that it can't be done.'

About three weeks later he mentions having had a wire from the Civil Secretary to say that his application for exemption from the Law exam. had been put before the Governor-General, and refused on the ground that it would be necessary to transfer him later on. Quite bad enough; but the real sting was in the tail of that wire:

'In view of the Governor-General's decision, I have entered your name for an examination to be held in January at Malakal.'

This was too much. He wired back instructions to withdraw his name, as he did not intend presenting himself for the examination. To use a favourite phrase of his own, he had definitely 'turned in his toes.' He amplified his decision in the diary, which, unlike wires, made no charge for extra words.

'I will not waste my valuable time doing unnecessary work. . . . Why should I squander hours now, cramming for a subject which will be forgotten as soon as the exam. is over? . . . If I were offered a thousand pounds, I could not sit down and work for an exam. My memory was never good, and now it is non-existent, so they must take me as they find me.'

It had probably been realized that he would have to be promoted rather sooner than later; but rules are rules, and it was necessary that officialdom should be justified in its own eyes. It seems hardly

fair to blame anyone concerned in the combat. It went on into the last days of his life, when he records:

‘From their last wire about my Law exam. I think it’s quite clear that they want me for promotion; but I won’t take it unless they give me a completely free hand.’

The need never arose to say any more about it.

Towards the end of that last year of his life, Vere was becoming keener than ever on his medical work. The diary is full of it.

‘Simons, the doctor from Malakal, met us yesterday, in great feather about our work. He says that Headquarters will give me anything in the world I ask for; and he wants me to take lessons in doing minor operations, which I certainly shall, if I have time. He joins us here to-morrow, when he is to see all our local dressers who came in to-day. Wheatley is delighted with them. Bimbashi Anson of the Equats. blew in this morning, and seemed amazed at everything. The Nuers gave him and his soldiers a great reception, presented them with two big bulls, and, when they left, gave them a rousing send-off. It was a first-class show, and Wheatley was greatly pleased with it. He himself received a fine ovation. They presented him with seven bulls and two sheep, and sang to him most of the day—and half the night as well. . . . I had another very nice letter from Baroness von Einem.

‘I think I told you she has twice sent me a consignment of medicines for my people. Now she has sent me a lot of very pretty Swiss toys for my table

—fifteen bears and twelve cows—awfully kind of her.

‘Wheatley and I are thoroughly enjoying ourselves. There is so little of his time left, we are making the most of it. He is spending ten days with me before meeting his wife, when he goes back to Wau and I make tracks for Khartoum. We are spending our time along the Ghazal River—his last official visit to me. . . . Great excitement when the Wau Post Boat drew alongside with Mrs. Wheatley on board. We blew the steam whistles and made an awful row. Quite a lot on board—a new D.C. and his bride; Capt. Ross of the Equats.: and Mrs. Titherington, going to join her husband at Wau. She is charming, and tremendously keen on medical work. I dined with them, and they all came on board the *Kerreri* to inspect it. . . . Had a wire to say I was to take over the Kordofan Dinkas. . . . When I am in Khartoum I shall try to get hold of a British M.O. to work with me for six months, so that I shan’t have the whole of the medical work on my own shoulders. You see, if anything happened to me, or if I were moved from here, the whole thing would go phut at once, which would be a great pity. I fear they are too short of men as it is. . . .

• They have new regulations about game, and I must not shoot any more elephants. They allow one a year, and only six in a lifetime, now; but I can’t grumble, as I have had my share. . . . When I arrived at Malakal, I heard that Crouch was due to leave Khartoum to-morrow, so I wired asking for his departure to be delayed, and promising to bring

him back with me on the 17th. . . . I'm glad I shall see Crouch and Atkey, as I want to get all this medical business on proper lines. To-day I've been drafting out lectures on hygiene and medicine which I want Crouch to teach my dressers. It sounds a bit tall for a layman to do such a thing, but it's just to give them an idea of what I want, and if they find any "hot air" they can scratch it out. I had a note from Simons saying Atkey had wired that he had no provision in his budget for my unofficial dressers, and that I must pay for medical stores, etc.

'Simons objected to the word "unofficial" being used, and answered that "Fergusson must be considered a first class medical officer, and not a mere layman." Atkey evidently thinks I have only 40 dressers going. I wonder what he'll say when he hears I have 101. . . .

'Oct. 12th. We ran into a hurricane last night. The storm blew overboard everything on deck that was movable. The Captain allowed us to get broad-side on, instead of keeping our nose into it, which would have been perfectly safe. At any rate it put the wind up him properly. The engine-room staff deserted their posts and rushed up on deck—rather disgraceful. However, nothing happened, which was lucky, as I should have got it in the neck from Khartoum for travelling without a barge, contrary to orders. . . .

'Oct. 20th. When I got to Khartoum I was met by Crouch and Barker, and heard that poor old Prideaux had been carried into hospital, suffering, they thought, from diphtheria. I was taken off by

Crouch to Atkey's house, where I stayed the whole time and was done very well—cars at my disposal, etc., etc. . . . When I went to the Military Hospital I found Prideaux looking very ill and weak. My tooth was worrying me a lot, and I did not want to wait indefinitely on the chance of his being well enough to attend to me; so I foolishly went to a quack dentist; but he made such a bad business of it I went back to Prideaux and reported. Before he was really fit to exert himself, he did all that was necessary, and I was immensely grateful.'

Realizing what a nuisance teeth could make themselves, he then took lessons in extraction, got a set of dental instruments for his own use, and was set up with dental syringes and local anaesthetics by Mr. Prideaux, who, like most people, was greatly interested in his work.

'The day after I got to Khartoum I was hauled in to a Medical Conference to settle the policy of medical work in the South. We came out very well, and got all the money we wanted for an intensive campaign in Harry Kidd's area, which was good. After that I was sent for by Matthew, the Adviser to the Governor-General's Council, and we talked for hours on Administration, Education, Taxation, and medical work; and I came out of that very well too, getting everything I wanted.'

Feeling it to be the right time for confidence, he explained the working of what he called his 'swindle fund,' *i.e.*, the result of fines being used at his own discretion for the good of his District instead of being turned over to the general funds of the Pro-

vince; and he was told to carry on and do as he liked, which of course was just what he wanted—and intended to do.

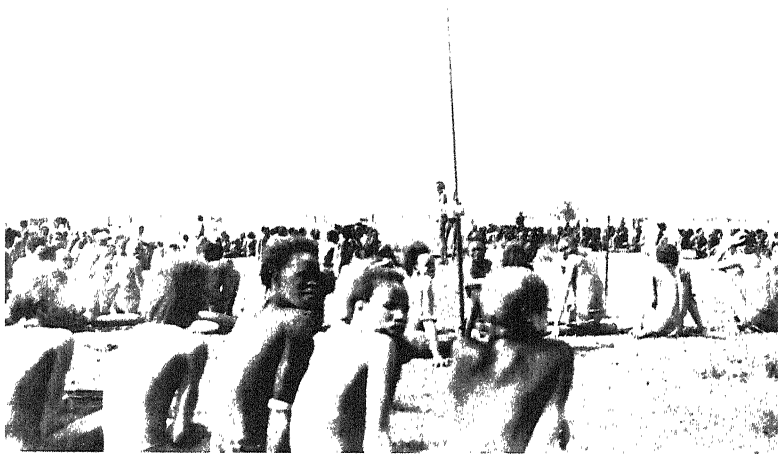
‘I was given two nice glass book-shelves by Dr. Footner, who is going away for good in January; also a glass medical cabinet for my instruments, a set of his surgeon’s knives, a smallpox set, disinfecting tins, and a number of books. You’d laugh to see my medical place now—frightfully professional looking, with instruments and dental forceps laid out in rows. I pity the first poor blighter who lets himself in for having a tooth extracted. It’s a nasty game, and one I don’t think I shall like; but that can’t be helped.

‘*Kerreri*. Nov. 7th. Here I am on my way to Shambe to meet Harry and Crouch and arrange for a medical campaign in Harry’s area. I got back from Khartoum all right, and very much pleased I was to get into the cool of the old Sud again. We stopped for a day at Malakal, where I gave lunch, and had the whole station on board for drinks in the evening. . . .

‘I arrived at Thar Jath (Madi’s old place) at 8 p.m., and found all the Chiefs and 60 odd sick waiting for me. I had dinner, and then, by lamp-light, finished off the medical work; after which I sat down for a conference with the Chiefs, which didn’t end till 3 a.m.! I had to do that so as to get to Shambe in time to keep to my programme with Crouch. They told me that their road was finished, and that there were no troubles worth mentioning. I shoved off all the carriers there, because I intend to start trekking as soon as I have finished with Shambe. The



ROAD MAKING



WAITING NUERS

place was very nice and clean, and cotton reports from the whole district are good; so our returns at last should repay us for our trouble. . . . This infernal 'flu has been making havoc all over the place. We've lost about 100 people. . . .

'The Kujur trouble among the Upper Nile Province Nuers seems to be still bad. . . . Troops of all sorts, aeroplanes, armoured cars, and cavalry as well as infantry have been ordered for January. . . .

'I nearly forgot to tell you that I performed my first dental operation a few days ago. When I got back from Khartoum I found one of the carriers with very bad toothache, gave him a local anaesthetic, and had the old molar out in a jiffy as clean as a whistle—thanks to Prideaux's instructions. The lucky fellow felt nothing. By Jove, one has to pull like the devil to get the things out! I never dreamt they were in so hard. I was pleased about it, for, as this was my first effort, I wasn't quite sure how things would be. . . . There has been no excitement, except that the *Kerreri's* cat fell overboard, and cried to heaven until we sent a boat off and picked her up.

'I have to write a screed on education, intended for the educational policy to be adopted. If I can get the Heads of Departments to adopt my schemes, they will work in with my administration policy, and I shan't then have to cut my cloth to suit other people's ideas of coats.'

A second job of dentistry came in his way, and he makes another proud record of a painless extraction. Immediately afterwards there followed a much more serious case that had nothing at all to do with teeth

—except the teeth of a crocodile that had caught an unfortunate Nuer by the sternworks and inflicted wounds which, when Vere saw them, were already in a state of putrefaction. If he had not been without delay operated on in the most drastic fashion, the man would inevitably have died of blood-poisoning. Always ready to meet an emergency, Vere unhesitatingly tackled a case that would have daunted most amateurs of surgery, having only a local anaesthetic to depend on. He cut off the whole of the mangled part, as well as two fingers that had been torn beyond mending, and then left his patient in charge of a local dresser with instructions as to saline dressings, intending to pick him up on his way back, and take him to hospital for skin-grafting.

When he called for the man, on his return journey, to Vere's surprise, his patient (whom he had pictured as still helplessly recumbent in a reversed position) walked out to meet him, and showed his wounds healing so cleanly that there was no need for him to be taken to hospital. Naturally he and his grateful relations gave Awaraquay such a reception as might have been accorded to one just descended from Olympus. And presently there was more to do.

'At Teng's house, they held a big dance when I arrived. They always jump about flourishing their spears—a dangerous ballroom practice—and two dancers got stuck within five minutes of each other; so, before I had even time to meet the people, I was busy with knife and needle. . . . I had two of the worst child cases I have ever had owing to the horrible abscesses which are invariably formed by

inter-muscular injections. I have resolved never to give one again. . . . Disease is nearly wiped out in some areas now. Our medical returns for Adok show only 700 injections this year, as against over 2500 last year—a pretty good proof of our success. . . . Now I must stop writing. All the cows in the country seem to be falling over my tent-ropes. They have spent most of the night sniffing about inside the tent too, and have knocked everything off my medical table.'

December

*Laughing and singing—always making pastime—
As you would have us do the whole day long,
Until we tread the long road for the last time,
And rest from toil, from laughter and from song.*

CLAUDE PENROSE

‘WHEN I reached Shambe on the 10th of November, I was pleasantly surprised to find Crouch, Bunty, Richards, Kidd, Porter and Bevan congregated there. I gave them all a great dinner on the boat. We dressed up in masks, played the fool generally, and Crouch and Harry kept us all alive with their antics. We sang, danced to the gramophone, and had the sort of cheery evening we always manage to have when we get together. Next day Crouch, Kidd and the Richards pair left for Bor; Porter pushed up the Ghazal River; and, in the evening, I left for Lake Jorr. I didn’t see much of Kidd, as he was busy looking after the others. Bevan is a young fellow with his head screwed on the right way—very pleasant, a hard worker, and very keen. It looks as if he might shape well in the future. . . . Don’t worry about my long hours, or think I am over-tiring myself with work. I know my job inside out, and nothing worries me mentally. A spot of physical hardship now and then does no one any harm, though it may make one temporarily tired. . . .

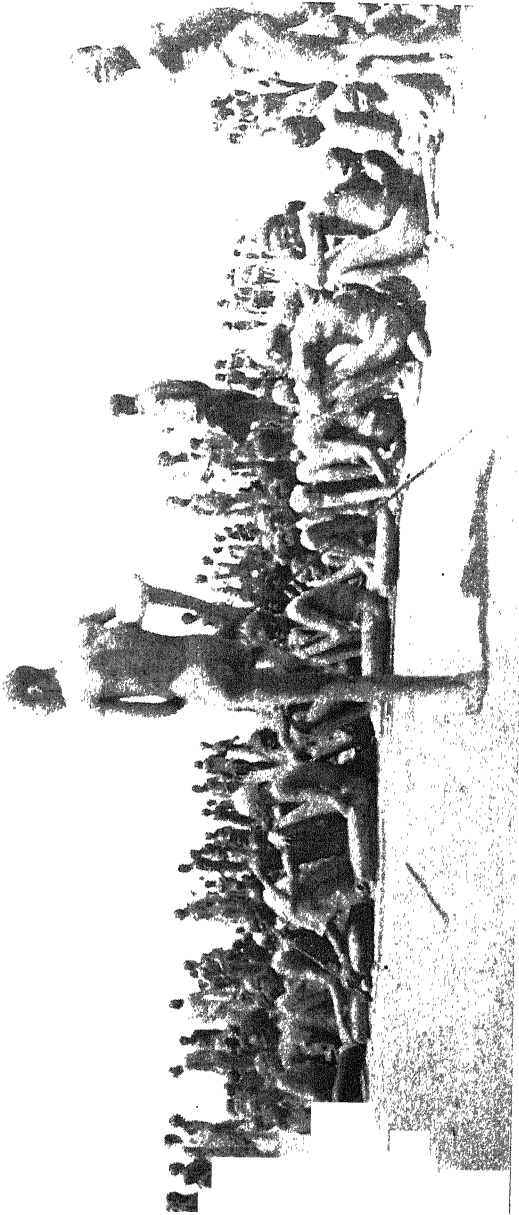
Garluark and the Chiefs got it hot and strong to-day. Garluark had been taking liberties with my cattle fines and animals he had taken from the Dinkas, and had been over-riding my orders. I got my fellows on the move, had a list made out of all cattle in his possession, and caught him red-handed. He was very crestfallen, and I left him in fear of his life. . . . When I was talking to the Chiefs, three of them happened to laugh foolishly at some serious remark I made, and they lost a cow each in consequence. It may sound a bit hard, but Garluark has let them get out of hand, owing to his dishonest dealings, and one must put discipline into them. I took half of Garluark's command away from him as a punishment, and refused to accept two huge tusks of ivory which he brought to pay his debts with. One has to be cruel to be kind with these people. He's quite a good fellow really, but just wants a bit more teaching; and I fancy to-day's strafe will be a wholesome lesson to him. . . . Consider our prospective Christmas party! That is going to be a strain on my resources if you like. Besides Harry Kidd and myself, there will be Kingdon from Rumbek, Major and Mrs. Wheatley, Bunty and Richards, Crouch, Bevan, Porter, Mr. and Mrs. Waller—if I remember any more I'll mention them! Masks and crackers as usual of course.

'Rouptchai. Nov. 23rd. This should be in time to wish you a very happy Christmas, and may you see many more. I shall be spending the day differently this year from what I usually do; in fact it will be reminiscent of that hectic one in the Gravesend

barrack-room in 1909, eighteen years ago—a long time, but, somehow, it seems like only yesterday. I'm just about to finish off my annual inspection of the Adok area, and I have nothing but praise for all that Teng has done. This year every single soul, with the exception of those who were absent outside the area, has turned up, showing great keenness on being put down on the census roll. We have done a great deal of reorganization, and I'm more than satisfied with everything. I've had a tremendous reception everywhere—bulls, many gallons of native beer, and food produced for my carriers too. In fact we have been treated royally. The discipline and general control is much improved.

‘There has been great speechifying, and everywhere I've heard praise of our medical work. It really does one good to think that our efforts have been so much appreciated. I was much struck by the altered attitude of the young children and girls, all of whom now rush out and welcome us, whereas last year they were hardly ever to be seen.

‘I fear Mr. Garluark, whom I am going to see the day after to-morrow, has put his foot in it badly. He has been excelling himself by stealing cattle, hiding rifles, and generally upsetting the whole place. I have heaps of evidence against him, and my Intelligence fellows have been working so well that they know the names and whereabouts of nearly 300 head of cattle which he had disposed of. The blighter, taking advantage of my friendliness to him, has been fining his people right and left, and keeping the fines for himself. In the last year he has bought thirteen



'VERY GOOD AT SITTING DOWN'

wives with the proceeds! I now have six of his near relations in chains for being in possession of stolen property, and it looks as if he might be there himself before long. It is unfortunate; but, in a way, a jolly good thing, as it gives me an opportunity of holding him up as a warning to others. Kelgai, my good interpreter, is with him now, and I am managing with a rather thick-headed fellow called Aketch. It is better to put my spot men to work on their own, and I can carry on with the rabble. The whole thing is rather a nuisance, as so many petty worries are heaped on one's head in consequence; but one must not follow the line of least resistance. I'm writing this now, as it is the first evening I've had free, or will have free for some time. Last night was an easy one, when I finished work at 10 p.m. The four nights previous to that, I was up after midnight, getting the census done by lamp-light. It takes an awful time, but the people are very good at sitting down! You never saw such crowds, and at times I despaired of ever getting through them, taking each one individually. However, I did it; and my consequent peace of mind has repaid me for the trouble.

'*Kardi*. Dec. 3rd. I have just returned from a five days' stay with Garluark's people in Area B. Things are all right now, I think; but, by Jove, that fellow was getting himself up to the neck in it! He had been playing a double game with me the whole time; and, although I had news that something of the kind was going on, I had no idea he was so foolish as to carry his daring to such lengths. Not

only had he pinched all my cattle fines and married umpteen wives with the proceeds, but also he had collared all the Dinka cattle and kept several rifles which should have been handed over, had not told me of a place he knew of for a landing-stage, and had not obeyed any orders I had given him. He knew he was in the soup badly, and when I arrived I found him shaking like a leaf. I refused to accept any hospitality from him, or to allow any dances in my honour, and encamped by a pool six miles away from his village, as a polite intimation that I could not trust him. Teng and his headmen were all with me, which hit Garluark badly, as the rivalry between the two is pretty stiff. The result, however, is good so far. He has handed over some 400 head of cattle, surrendered all rifles, turned out all his people for census, found his landing-stage, and we've got the show organized at last. I was sorry for him in a way, because I liked him, but I had to make him toe the line, and he's lucky that I haven't chucked him out altogether. . . . Phew!—This is a horrible bit of country, and I'm glad to be getting out of it. The heat through the long grass to-day was appalling, and the water-pools have nearly all dried up, which makes trekking difficult.

‘Adok. Dec. 6th. Only one more trek now, and I'll be back on the river again, thank goodness. The last couple of days have been very trying and tiring—long distances without water. . . . There's no doubt that Garluark's "fall" has made the right impression here. . . . We got a great reception at Gwai, and they rather surprised me by asking me to be

present at the ceremony of cutting tribal marks on boys' heads. I was much flattered, because it's not a thing a "foreigner" is allowed to see. It consists of cutting six long lines across the forehead from temple to temple. The boys who are to be cut are laid on the ground on their backs in a row, with an interval of two yards between each and the next one. A hole about a foot deep is dug under the head of each, and then the master of ceremonies takes a dirty-looking knife and makes the cuts almost to the bone. The boys are not allowed to make a sound, and indeed none of them did, although two wee boys of about eight or nine couldn't help squirming their feet about in agony. How any human being could stand such torture I don't know. The actual cutting is painful enough, but the worst time is about twelve or fifteen minutes after the operation is over. Then, they say, the pain is terrible. The blood streams into the holes in the ground, and the victims are tended by their relatives and given milk to drink when they get weak. It is a horrible thing to watch, but I'm glad I saw it. After all have been cut, the relatives dance and amuse themselves. This ceremony takes place every five or six years, the idea being to form a new class of warriors each time. I presented them with a bull, which pleased them. . . .

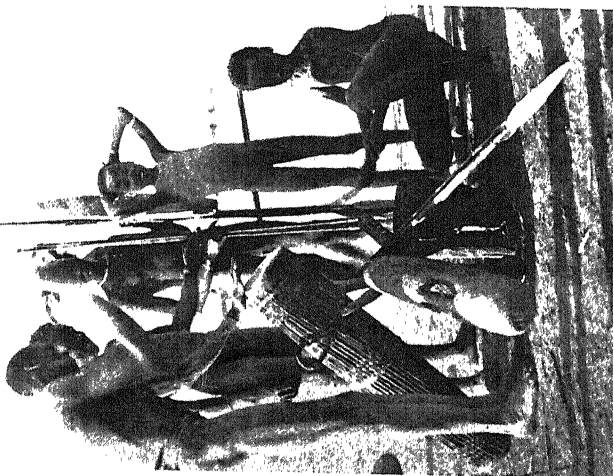
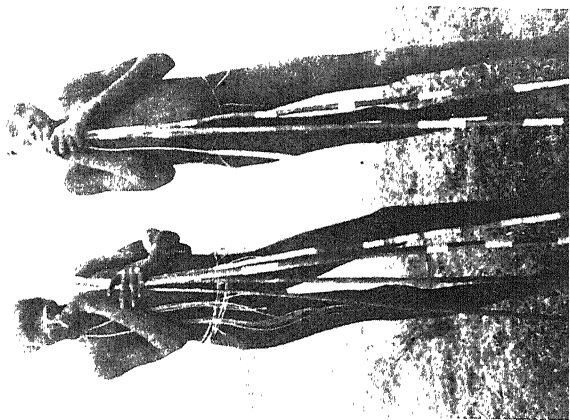
'To-morrow the whole District is to do another job of work on the ramped road across water-logged swamps. After that I go to the river, spend a few days repairing the Adok landing-stage, and then move on to Lake Jorr, where I hope to finish before

Christmas. The mail arrived yesterday. . . . So glad Di and Zana are to go to you. I look forward to having a rag with them when I go home, and I'll teach them some Arabic to amuse them. . . . Glad you got the Rhino horn. The heads are to follow.' One of them was of the valuable and rare Mrs. Gray. 'Dec. 12th. After leaving Adok, I pushed along and discovered Garluark's new landing-place for his area. It is a fine spot, and I marked out the ground for him to start building it up at once. I'm off to Shambe now to find him a suitable merchant, and then I shall start work in the Jorr area.'

Of the meeting that followed Porter wrote afterwards: 'It will always be a great comfort to remember the most excellent and happy day that Fergie, Kidd, Ross and I spent together at Shambe—Fergie in his best form, and as happy and cheerful as I have ever seen him.'

And Ross wrote: 'I shall always bear with me and treasure the memory of those two happy days'—(the 12th and 13th of December)—'spent with Vere on my return from leave. He was so wonderfully gay and happy, and so full of confidence in his work. He seemed to take me into his confidence more than he had ever done before, and told me a tremendous lot about his work which I had never properly understood till then.'

It was always a memory of sympathetic gaiety that remained with his friends. If he had troubles of his own, he never laughed less because of them. Here too, at Shambe, he picked up the Greek merchant, Andrea Panayiotopoulos, whom he had



chosen to take with him; and for him too the end was near.

‘No more now. . . . I have a lot to do to-night, and Ross and Porter took up all my time to-day. . . .’

His Reward

*Nought man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap.*

* * * * *

'Tis God shall repay! I am safer so.

ROBERT BROWNING

THE *Kerreri* left Shambe at eleven o'clock on the 13th of December, and reached Lake Jorr at 3 a.m. on the 14th. There was a great deal to be done, and at 6 a.m. Vere set his carriers to work, clearing away grass, so that the new road he intended to make should be marked out as soon as possible.

At 7 a.m. about three thousand Nuers arrived at the Lake Jorr Post, and several of them went to the *Kerreri*, asking for an audience. Vere told them to wait with the others, and he would see them all at his camp near the merchant's shop after breakfast. Then he went, with his two interpreters, Akech and Kai, to put out the bamboos marking the line of the new road, and waited for his breakfast until that was finished, so that it was quite half-past nine when he went ashore to apportion and divide the work of the road between the assembled people, their Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs being present. The interpreter, Kai, was helping with this, but Aketch was still busy putting in the side pegs to mark the road.

Andrea Panayiotopoulos was an interested spectator, and was no doubt feeling at the moment how fortunate he was in having things made easy and pleasant for him. He knew as well as everyone else that Vere disliked and distrusted the general run of Mohammedan merchants for their unconscionable cheating of the natives, and was glad of the opportunity offered to him of putting in a man of his own to run the shop at Lake Jorr. His selected shopman was Maydook, a Dongola native, now brought to replace Ibrahim, who had been selling there for the last year. He had three servants with him, Mashiek, Mading, and Gebalado; and the superannuated merchant, Ibrahim, also had a servant, Maliem. Lueth, Chief of the Dinka carriers, was with them, as well as Vere's servant, Zemondo. Other servants, Dinka carriers and Nyam-Nyam carriers filled the background.

When the business of apportioning work was finished, at about 11 a.m., Vere went to his camping ground, on the river side of the merchant's shop, and began talking about ivory to Andrea Panayiotopoulos. It seemed as though there were plenty of time, still so early in the day, to discuss trifles of the kind. . . .

Suddenly there was an ominous movement among the Nuers. They were all coming on towards the District Commissioner's group, and he thought no more of ivory as he looked up to see what was happening. Almost before he had time to realize that what he saw meant a hostile demonstration, the attack began. A young Nuer,—a mere boy, but

counted as a man and a warrior because his forehead had already been cut and healed—greatly daring, threw his spear at Awaraquay.

There may have been a moment's pause; that huge assembly may have drawn breath, waiting to see if the boy would fall to the ground, blasted by the anger of Awaraquay, for even yet they hardly believed him to be an ordinary mortal. How could he have moved fearlessly and unprotected among them, even in their most turbulent times, if there were not in him some inherent magic on which he could always count to keep him safe from exhibitions of enmity? Suppose the spear did not touch him, and suppose it were thrown back, pinning that sacrilegious youth to the ground?—But, no! Awaraquay was not invulnerable. . . . The boy was not an expert; he struck towards the heart, but the spear slanted downwards, merely grazing the skin; still, the sacred skin *had* been punctured. . . . Awaraquay pulled the spear from his clothing and hurled it back; but the boy easily evaded it, and the weapon fell, harmless. Behold, he was as other men! The signal had been given.

Immediately another spear was thrown—this time by a malformed dwarf, a hunchback; and the second one found its mark. It entered Vere's body at the left side, under the arm and level with his heart, piercing straight through his body and coming out at the right side under his armpit.

He had time to cry, 'I'm done. Run for the boat!'—his last word, his last thought for others—and, as he fell forward, another spear was hurled from

behind, and entered between his shoulder blades, coming out at his chest. Death was instantaneous. When he fell, every Nuer who could reach him stuck his spear into the body that could no longer feel.

When Andrea Panayiotopoulos saw the first spear thrown he rushed forward to protect Vere, but was immediately killed himself—speared through back and side. One of Vere's servants caught hold of the first assailant, but, in his attempts to avoid the spear hurled at him, let his captive escape. In going to his master's assistance, Mading was wounded; Mashiek and Gebalado were killed; so also were Maydook; Ibrahim and his servant Maliem; Vere's servant Zemondo, and his interpreter Kai; Lueth and two other Dinka carriers; three Nyam-Nyam carriers; two of the Government cattle attendants; two Dinka cotton men, and one of the trained Medical Dressers.

It was the Greek's servant, Mading, who brought news of the tragedy when, bleeding and exhausted, he reached the *Kerreri*. The carriers, who had been working behind the camp, also escaped to the *Kerreri*, and the Nuers followed, attempting to attack them and the sailors; but a gun had been left on board, and four shots were fired from the *Kerreri* at the oncoming Nuers. This stopped their rush for just long enough to let the sailors cast loose and push the boat out into the lake. The *Kerreri* went back to Shambe, where it was met by Porter, who had been there with Vere the day before, and had intended joining him later at Lake Jorr.

Among those who escaped on board the *Kerreri* was the Nuer Chief, Riag, who immediately volunteered to do all in his power to help in capturing the murderers. He had been at the merchant's shop on Lake Jorr from the night of the 13th, waiting for the coming of the District Commissioner, and no word had reached him concerning any plot to murder or revolt. He knew, however, that a number of the natives and Sub-Chiefs present at the fight belonged to Garluark, who, as all the Nuer world was aware, had been publicly reprimanded by Awaraquay only a week before. What was a man to think? The Government must be informed. And the Government must also know that, after the killing, a thousand sacks filled with Awaraquay's cotton had been burnt. . . . Men and things—great work—great endeavour—and, the greatest of all, Awaraquay, who could never be replaced—all were gone. But why? When Riag had time to think, he thought he knew.

Garluark

*He slew good men and spared the bad;
Too long a life the foul dog had.*

WILLIAM MORRIS

AND this Garluark, who had been forgiven, helped, trusted? There have been as foul traitors since Judas, but not many fouler. Judging by his history in detail, it would seem that he hated much because he was forgiven much.

As it has been shown, from the very first—1922—he refused to “come in” or to have anything to do with Awaraquay; but inexhaustible patience was waiting to deal with him, also a tact that was in daily exercise and did not wait for emergencies to call it forth. Garluark was finally induced to visit Adok and discuss matters. The situation looked hopeful, but no one knew what was going on behind that scarred forehead. Garluark suddenly got up and left the meeting, and, on his way out, relieved his feelings by clubbing his uncle, with whom he had a feud. This piece of impulsiveness might alone have been sufficient reason for flying to his own village; but, once there, he would listen to no inducements; and Vere determined on an attempt to capture him. With ten Police, he started at five o’clock in the morning, struggled through the swamps, the journey

taking him thirteen hours; and, in the evening, he surprised Garluark's Morah on the edge of the swamps. The cattle were captured and the houses burnt, but Garluark himself escaped and fled to Chief Madi, north of Adok.

Vere was at that time negotiating with Chief Madi, who was wavering, his disinclination to submit being increased by anger at the death of his favourite nephew, who had been killed in a raid on the Dinkas. The arrival of Garluark turned the scale against the Government, for Garluark had his own prestige as a leader of warriors to back his opinions, and Madi there and then broke off negotiations.

Vere therefore marched to Madi's village with a force of fifty Police, and, halting short of the village, called on Madi to come and meet him. Madi sent back friendly messages, but diplomatically implied a modest estimate of his own influence. He said that his young men, being led by Garluark, refused to listen to him.

Vere then moved into the village, and found all the young men in the act of putting on their war paint. Madi himself maintained an appearance of friendliness, but continued to bewail his inability to control his warriors, who were under Garluark's influence. There was nothing to be done but to retire to a position where there would be a better chance of resisting an attack, at the same time telling Madi in diplomatic language that he greatly regretted this unfortunate reception, but that he would return. Possibly this promise of a repeated visit left Madi not quite happy, and his influence may have

been greater than he pretended, for no attack was made, and Vere went back to the river.

The inevitable result of all this was a Patrol against Madi. As soon as the troops appeared, the Nuers made a determined attack, but were heavily defeated; and, a few days later, both Madi and Garluark surrendered at Adok. Madi died shortly afterwards; but his section has remained loyal ever since, excepting those who, in the following year, joined the Kujur, Dak Dthul; and on that occasion a small Patrol utterly defeated the rebels. This was one of the sections which showed staunch loyalty when the great trouble came, later.

When Garluark surrendered, his display of regret and humility was exactly calculated to appeal to Fergie Bey's kindness of heart. He was the last man in the world to act relentlessly towards a repentant savage who declared that he had sinned through ignorance; and Garluark, instead of being punished, was sent to Yirrol to be instructed in the duties of a Chief and the aims and methods of Government. When he returned, after a few months's instruction, he appeared to be so convinced of the benefits of being under Government, and so ready and willing to do what he was told, that, knowing his influence as a Chief, and considering what its value might be now that he was converted to right thinking, Vere after a short time decided, with the concurrence of the Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal, to appoint him the Head, or Government Chief, of all the Nuong Nuers.

When the Nuers were brought under control, it

was made plain to them that raids on the Dinkas must cease; but, old habit being hard to break, from time to time temptation overcame resolution, and raids took place—these, however, becoming fewer as Government control strengthened.

The Nuers were ordered to return all cattle that had been stolen since the advent of the Government in their country, and the Dinkas were invited to lay their cases before the Nuer Chiefs. All the sections obeyed this order, except the Nuong, especially on Lake Jorr and in Garluark's own area.

Garluark personally assured Vere that there were no more Dinka cattle in his country, except those about which their Dinka owners were then bringing cases; but, from various information received, Vere became suspicious, gradually reached the unwelcome conclusion that the truth was not in Garluark, and sent his chief interpreter, Kelgai, to investigate. He discovered that, although some cattle had been returned to the Dinkas—presumably for the look of the thing—Garluark had kept a good number for himself, and had made his people happy, as a good ruler should, by letting them keep two or three cows each. The limit had been reached; and in November '27 Vere went into Garluark's country, and camped outside Garluark's own village, sending a message to say that he knew orders had not been obeyed and that he would not enter the village until Garluark produced the cattle he had unlawfully retained. Garluark's feelings were hurt; he professed to be greatly insulted by such a message; nevertheless, over 300 cattle were forthcoming; after which Vere moved



GARLUARK

into the village, sending the cattle off to their owners with Dinka herdsmen.

Investigation proved Garluark's deceit beyond a doubt, and showed that he not only kept Dinka cattle himself but had instigated others to do the same. Garluark had been trusted, and had abused the trust placed in him. He was clearly unfit to remain a 'Government Chief.'

Very likely it appeared to Vere, he being what he was, that it was better to trust too much than too little; but the deception was not a thing to be overlooked. Garluark was removed from his important position; the southern section of the Nuong Nuers was given to one of his headmen, Chief Riang; and the northern section, the Gwai, to Chief Teng of Adok. The only people left under him were his own particular section, which had been his before his promotion; and Garluark, from being one of the biggest and most important Chiefs, was reduced to a minor position.

Until the occasion of this trouble about the Dinka cattle, Vere had firmly believed in Garluark's loyalty, and had more than once spoken highly of him to the Governor; but, from information received afterwards, it became apparent that he had been completely deceived as to Garluark's real character and attitude. Trading on his obviously good position with the District Commissioner, Garluark had been dealing with his people in an extremely high-handed fashion. Taxes were good things, therefore he would invent some of his own. These took the form of cattle, ivory and wives—

named in the order of importance. He and his relations (naturally not including the uncle who was clubbed) waxed fat at the expense of his people; and of course there were the Dinka cattle.

A particular instance of his double dealing came to light; at the time when Vere and Capt. Crouch were carrying out their intensive medical campaign in the Lake Jorr area, they explained the scheme for training boys as dressers, and Garluark said that he and the people heartily approved of it. The actual fact was that the people did not like it at all, fearing that it would entail the loss of their sons, and Garluark fanned the flame by telling them that, if they allowed the boys to be taken to the steamer, they would never see them again. This resulted in a plot to kill Vere and Crouch, which was not carried out, only because plans for taking the boys by steamer were altered.

But one plot followed another. While Vere was in Garluark's village in November, he was approached by a certain Garkek and two of Garluark's brothers-in-law, who badly wanted to know what was to be done in their own particular cases. They were sorrowful because of their exceeding great possessions. What did it matter if some insignificant person among the Nuong had to give up his wretched cow or two?—But behold *them*—people of importance! Garkek's whole large herd consisted of Dinka cattle, and to lose it meant to sink from wealth to penury. The brothers-in-law possessed two extra special bulls, given to them by Garluark as part price of their sisters. Without these

bulls, ruin stared them in the face. Surely exceptional terms might be made. . . . Vere naturally did not regard the situation from their point of view, and they retired to the nursing of a large grievance in the family.

The outcome of this was the decision to kill Awaraquay as the only means of escape from carrying out his ruinous orders. But Garluark was much too clever to incriminate himself by allowing such a crime to take place in his country. Garkek and the brothers-in-law might have cattle at stake, but *he* had his reputation and position—or what was left of them. He stood in the eye of Government, even though he had forfeited his right to be called a Government Chief, and it was but due to his own interests to act circumspectly. Still there was no need for Garkek or Shol Weng to be disheartened. Their opportunity would come before long, for did not the District Commissioner intend to visit Lake Jorr?—And, as that area had been taken away from Garluark, he could not be held responsible for what might happen in it. A nod was as good as a wink to the owner of a mighty herd or to brothers-in-law who possessed valuable bulls. When men had as much as they had, they could not question its being worth while to take a risk. As for him, he had lost, not gained, but he might recover ground if he played his cards properly. . . .

After the deed was done by his tools, Garluark went to his head Sub-Chief, Rhon Dial, and told him to take his men and go and arrest the murderers, as then the Government would realize his loyalty

and reinstate him. It seems evident that his cunning was quite equalled by his shamelessness. He also said that, while Rhon Dial carried out his orders, he himself would go off to Adok, and report to the first official who might arrive there. Rhon Dial, who apparently was less of a fool or tool than Garluark had believed him to be, made surprising answer that Garluark had played that game on him before, and that he wasn't going to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for him again—or words to that effect. Having begun speaking plainly, he went on, telling Garluark that everyone knew him to be the instigator of the murders on Lake Jorr, and that it was useless for him to disclaim responsibility; also he prophesied that the result of the crime would be that the 'Turks' would destroy their villages and take their cattle, and that Garluark himself would be arrested directly he got to Adok.

Rhon Dial later on explained to the authorities that it was believed among the Nuers that no one would dare to attack Awaraquay, and their fear of Garluark was chiefly caused by knowing that he derived his authority from Vere. But they feared him also because he was a bully; and, his rule being one of iron, they did not dare to oppose his wishes. Their own wishes coincided with his so far as the Dinka cattle were concerned; but it was with the idea of pleasing Garluark that, when Vere was murdered, they joined in helping to kill his followers and loot and burn the Government Post. Undoubtedly Garluark's influence had created a hostile spirit throughout the Nuong, especially in

his own section and the two sections which had been taken from him; and, although they would not themselves have attacked Awaraquay, they were quite ready to join in when he had been murdered, imagining that his death meant the end of Government control, and that the hated order against raiding the Dinkas had been killed with him. It is certain that neither the murders nor the revolt which followed would have taken place if Garluark had been loyal, or even if he had not done everything in his power to foster a spirit of discontent. The resentment over the enforced return of Dinka cattle would have subsided, and, Vere's prestige being so great, there would have been no question of hostilities.

One can understand how it was that Vere was given no hint from any quarter of the proposed attempt on his life. The plot was made by only a few men, who evidently knew the value of silence. Even if rumours had leaked out, no one would have laid much stress on them, believing that Awaraquay would be able in some occult manner to frustrate any attempt on his life. It does not seem possible that Kelgai, the interpreter, who had gone to Garluark's village, could have heard any such rumours, because he arrived there only one day before the crime was committed. His servant bore witness that, when the news came, Kelgai was frightened, and that he remained in his hut, afraid to show himself. Kelgai said afterwards that the news of the District Commissioner's death stunned him, and he told the Governor that some of Garluark's men wanted to

kill him, but Garluark—no doubt anxious to keep up the Good Boy appearance—would not permit this, and kept him in his hut under guard. Garluark asked him if the Government would kill everyone in retaliation for the murder of Awaraquay; but Kelgai explained that the Government punished only the guilty, and never killed a man because someone else had committed a crime. Garluark's comment on this was that he would not, therefore, be held to blame for the happenings on Lake Jorr.

The next day Garluark held a meeting, and disclaimed any connection with the massacre. He said he was going in to the Government, and asked who was with him. This bears out Rhon Dial's statement, and is just what one would have expected to happen. Garluark took Kelgai to the meeting, and, when they had returned, made him repeat everything Garluark had said. When the examination was over, Garluark calmly remarked that Kelgai would now be able to testify to his innocence.

A few days later, Garluark, taking an escort of four young men as far as his boundary, and having Kelgai with him, went to Adok to await the coming of the first Government official who might arrive there; and this happened to be Capt. Crouch, M.C., on the *Lady Baker*.

Other evidence came in. Twil Ran, the Government Chief of the Jakaing section on the Bahr-el-Ghazal, reported that Garluark, after he had been deposed, sent him a message to say that Captain Fergusson was going off with a Patrol against the Lau Nuers, who were overpowering Government,

and that it was no longer necessary to obey Captain Fergusson's orders, therefore no more boys should be sent to the school at Yoynyang.

The case was clear enough. Garluark, being a young man filled with the wrong kind of pride and a great sense of his own importance, was stung beyond endurance by his sudden disgrace. He had had great influence and had been the most powerful man in his tribe, but he had done what vaulting ambition had done before; and having, entirely by his own fault, lost his position, his thoughts were centred on the possibility of regaining it. It seemed to him that the only sure way to accomplish this was to remove an obstacle, and the obstacle was Vere; therefore he instigated the murder in his own interests. The discontent aroused by the order that the Dinkas' cattle were to be returned gave him his chance; and the special cases of his brothers-in-law and Garkek suggested instruments ready to his hand. He covered himself as cunningly as any international crook might have done. Nothing could have been a better example of criminal genius than his arranging to have the murders committed in the country that had lately been taken from him; and he had the supreme good fortune of having got hold of Vere's trusted interpreter. If such an one as Kelgai witnessed that Garluark had never left his own village, not even a white man would doubt it.

When he found that the murder had resulted in a general rebellion, his next stroke of business was masterly. So far from turning tail and flying for his life, he went boldly to Adok for the purpose of

meeting a Government official, so that he might without loss of time disclaim any association with the murderers and rebels. He had not wished for a general rising. His original plan had no need for it. Having a saner idea of the strength of Government than had those others, whose mental powers did not equal his own, he knew that Vere would have a successor, and he counted on his cleverness to deal with that successor. The new District Commissioner should of course be led to see the mistake Vere had made in deposing Garluark. The thing would be obvious. Had not the murders taken place directly Garluark's back was turned?—Therefore must Garluark be immediately reinstated, so that his good influence might prevent any murders happening in the future. Without doubt he had not wished for a general rising; experience had taught him that no good could come of that; and he was playing solely for his own hand. All he wanted to ensure his winning was the removal of the obstacle in his path.

A wholesale massacre followed by a rising could do him no good, rather harm; but, with all his cleverness, he left out of account the effect bloodshed was likely to have on the wild tribesmen over whom he desired to rule. He supposed Government would demand the surrender of those who had actually speared Awaraquay, and impose a fine, which would end the matter comfortably. But it wasn't going to be so easy as all that. The people, knowing well enough that Garluark had instigated the crime committed by his tools, naturally took for granted that Garluark would now be their leader in

driving the 'Turks' out of their country. He had pleased them in the past with so much disloyal talk that they expected him now to act on it. They did not blame him for keeping away from Lake Jorr at the time of the murder, but regarded his doing so merely as a sensible precaution, because up to the last moment no one felt sure that the spears would not be turned aside by the strong magic inherent in the most wonderful white man they knew; and, when they saw that he was vulnerable, they believed themselves practically free from the yoke of Government, committed wild excesses, killing, plundering, and counting on the approval of Garluark, who, true to no one but himself, was even then attempting to make his peace with Government by disclaiming complicity and giving himself up voluntarily.

The rising spread; the Dinkas were robbed anew; more white men were killed; and the native cotton instructor in the country of the Gwai was murdered. A Government Patrol followed; and there were certain loyal Chiefs who, grieving with a personal grief for Awaraquay, did all they could to help. Unfortunately there were delays in starting the punitive expedition, owing to the confusion caused by the loss of Vere; and the rebel Nuers got away to the swamps, where they felt safe from the troops that could not follow them. They found, however, that they could be reached from the air; and bombing—although there were few casualties, except among the cattle—completely demoralized them and brought about surrender.

The boy who threw the first spear was among those killed in the attack on the swamps by the punitive expedition. Garkek Gir escaped by the skin of his teeth, but hopes of eventually catching him have not yet been abandoned.* In spite of all efforts to capture Shol Weng, the hunchback who was Garluark's brother-in-law, he eluded his pursuers for a year and a half, and his escape might have been permanent if his nerve had not failed him. In the end he gave himself up, confessing that he was tired of being chased; but, notwithstanding the crime he had committed and the trouble he had given, there was no summary justice. He had as fair and formal a trial, followed by as fair and formal a hanging as any white man could have desired.

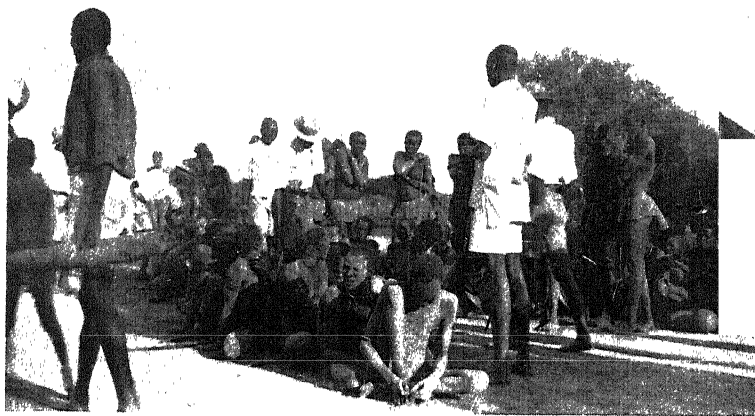
The other brother-in-law was acquitted; and the arch-traitor, Garluark himself, having been clever enough to escape hanging, is still a prisoner, and will, as far as can be foreseen, end his life in Malakal gaol.

Nothing could be more wonderfully convincing as to the rightness of Fergie Bey's work and ideals than the attitude of the great mass of the Nuers after the murder. It was really splendid. Not only the big Chiefs but the people as a whole came forward with guarantees of peace in their own districts and offers to help the Government in pursuit and punishment of the murderers, and to carry on Vere's work on the lines laid down by him. The people from Adok, Thar Jath, Yoynyang, and all the Gazelle

* While these pages are going through the press, comes the news that Garkek Gir has been captured at last.



SURRENDERED PRISONERS



BROUGHT IN FROM THE SWAMPS

meshras, under their Chiefs, carried on the work in the name of the Government, unsupervised. Teng of Adok, with his spearmen, captured and handed in over 400 head of cattle from Garluark's country; the cotton markets continued; and the whole life of the people went on, peacefully and industriously, under the guidance of the Chiefs, who had been taught the true meaning of their business as Chiefs by Vere. That his influence should have survived himself was the surest proof of its value.

There were those who believed in his methods all along; and there were those who, disbelieving, tried to make it difficult for him to carry them out; but the practical proofs of this survival of influence silenced effectually and finally the voice of doubt in all quarters. The conduct of the loyal Nuers was—as a fellow worker remarked—‘the greatest and most glorious memorial that Fergie could possibly have or would wish for.’

The Burial of Awaraquay

*So I turn from his grave—no delay!
Darkness finds me, head high, unafraid—
And my heart in the dust.*

CLAUDE PENROSE

As soon as it was possible to do so, the torn bodies that lay beside Lake Jorr were brought away by Capt. Kidd and Capt. Crouch, who had both been most intimately associated with Vere on different sides of his work. Mr. Porter, Inspector of Agriculture, who was the first to be reached by news of the murders when the *Kerreri* returned, had suggested an immediate attempt to recover the bodies, but had been told that his first duty was to report what had happened to Capt. Kidd at Yirrol, after which the bodies might be recovered under police protection.

—It seems to be little short of miraculous that they were ever recovered from a spot open to wild men by day and wild beasts by night. A story arose later that one of the many natives who worshipped Awaraquay hid himself in the long grass, and, when all the warriors had gone, came out at night to keep watch and scare away the hyaenas. That story may rest on no firmer foundation than the fact that one of Vere's friends dreamt of it as a thing that had happened; but, even if so, the dream may have been

the telepathic outcome of an actual occurrence. It is difficult to account for the bodies being eventually found untouched and recognisable.

A very general desire was expressed that there should be a representative gathering at the funeral, and many difficulties arose in attempting to fix a date on which one or other of Vere's friends and brother officials would not be of necessity engaged elsewhere. Not only did those of the Sudan Political Service wish to be present, but also it was decided to bring up to Shambe a Company of the Equatorial Battalion, to which Vere had belonged, so that he might be buried with Military honours. Major Bostock, who was in command, wrote just before the funeral, the date for which had at last been fixed for the 11th of February 1928: 'I am taking fifty of my men as funeral and firing party. They will be in rags, but they come from those with whom Fergie has always been connected in his service in this country, and their swamp-rooted uniforms will typify his hard life in those self-same swamps. I need not say that I have always looked on Fergie with the admiration which a man in a thousand is bound to exact. . . . We always made a point of meeting when he passed through Khartoum, and it is only fitting that I, as his oldest Equat. friend, should have been called off another Patrol to command the one to avenge him.'

Shambe, so often mentioned in the diary, is a small Government station on a lagoon branching off the Jebel River (White Nile), and is about fifty miles south of Lake Jorr. At this small place, for the last time, Vere's friends came to meet him, and the

funeral was held—a ceremony reverent and dignified.

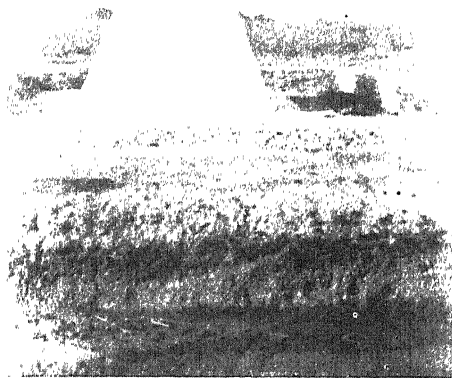
His coffin was carried by four Equatorial soldiers, and his friends, Kidd, Richards, Ross and Bevan walked beside it as pall-bearers; an escort of Equatorials marched in front, and there was a line of them on either side, with arms reversed. The Union Jack covered his coffin and on it lay his old sword and helmet.

Andrea Panayiotopoulos, who had fallen at his side, was also buried at his side, in a coffin covered as was seemly with a Greek flag, and so shared his honours as well as his fate.

The funeral service was read by Major Wheatley, whose wife, the only Englishwoman present, had travelled to Shambe from Wau, the Headquarters of Bahr-el-Ghazal Province. Major Wheatley was Vere's friend as well as his political chief, and it was a hard task he had set himself. He said afterwards, it was only by shutting his mind to what he was doing that he was able to get through the service without breaking down.

Three volleys were fired; and, after the Last Post, fittingly, the buglers sounded the Réveille.

That was two years ago. Since then a marble slab has been placed over the grave in the little cemetery at Shambe; and by Lake Jorr, on the spot where Vere fell under the wounds with which he was wounded in the house of his friends, there stands a memorial cairn but lately completed. The monument, designed by Sir Charles Nicholson, is of hopwood stone, pyramid shaped; twelve feet at the base



THE MONUMENT AT JORR



and nine feet high. It is surmounted by a cross; and a stone plaque, let into the front of the pyramid, bears the inscription:

‘AWARAQUAY’

IN MEMORY OF VERE HENRY FERGUSSON, O.B.E.,
CAPTAIN SCOTTISH RIFLES, DISTRICT COMMIS-
SIONER, WHO WAS KILLED ON THIS SPOT DECEMBER
14TH 1927

‘By those for whom he lived he died.’

A stone wall, two and a half feet high, has been built round three sides of the cairn, and the space between wall and pyramid has been planted with cannas.

Even before the monument was erected, it had become customary to salute the spot—a practice begun by Captain Crouch, and carried on by officials and natives alike. Although a few natives killed him at the behest of one bad and powerful man, Vere was loved and revered by thousands; and, as his Governor said, ‘In native lore “Awaraquay” will become a legend.’

More than a year ago, when crops failed, disease was rife among the cattle, and many children died, the Nuers believed that spirit vengeance was being taken for his murder; and, when they lost a child, the parents called down curses upon Garkek Gir, the murderer still at large.

There was a certain Chief Diu, a big Kujur with a large following, who had got into trouble over dishonest dealings with regard to cattle and been deposed by Vere. When Capt. Kidd was at Lake Jorr

immediately after the murders, this Diu came to him and said that, although he had been deposed, he knew it was his own fault, that he still looked on Awaraquay as his father and mother, and that it was his wish to help the Government in hunting the murderers. Capt. Kidd is fully convinced that Shol Weng's surrender was to a great extent brought about by the enthusiastic assistance given by Diu. There was something particularly fine in the attitude of this wild man who could own himself in the wrong and burn to avenge the man who, although punishing him, had, he knew, treated him fairly.

Capt. Crouch took on Vere's servant, Nyenabu, as his personal attendant wholly for the sake of the link he made between *then* and *now*; but even that brought small comfort to Nyenabu, who, old man though he was, bemoaned himself saying, 'Now that Awaraquay, who was my father and mother, is dead, who will care what becomes of me?'

Another of Vere's servants, Mekki, told Major Wheatley, of a dream that he had shortly after the murder. Mekki, in his dream, saw Vere surrounded by flowers, and cried to him of his sorrow; but Vere answered, 'There is no reason for grief. You can see these beautiful flowers around me and know that I am perfectly happy.'

Afterwards, there were other and greater evidences of his happiness. But these were not dreams.

Epilogue

*And fair were my fate, beloved,
if I were yet on the earth
When the world is awaken at last,
and from mouth to mouth they tell
Of thy love and thy deeds and thy valour,
and thy hope that nought can quell.*

WILLIAM MORRIS (*Mother and Son*)

It remains only to make plain the strong feeling of love and loyalty that clings to the memory of Vere Fergusson. Much has been written and said of him. He was spoken of, contrastingly, in churches and at banquets; and—months after his death—on Speech Day at Wellington College he was acclaimed as an Empire Builder of whom his old school might well be proud, both in the Headmaster's speech and in the speech which followed, made by the Duke of Connaught; but there were no old boys, his contemporaries, to hear, and only one master who had known him was present. In a sense—a very local and limited sense—recognition of what he was came too late.

These things were as months passed on. But immediately, at the time of bereavement, came assurances of sympathy from high and low. The King and Queen, Lord Lloyd, Ministers of the Crown, Governors of States and Provinces, high officials

sent their words of sorrow and condolence to mingle with those of plain people like the rest of us.

He himself would have liked best to know what the Sudan said of him—how the Governor-General, Sir John Maffey, wrote of his great work among the Nuers and spoke of them as ‘his kingdom’: ‘You must have only pride in the great work your son was able to do. . . . It is for us to wonder how we can carry on without him. . . . I realized that he lived a lonely life under hard conditions, and I asked him if he would like a transfer, hoping that he would refuse. He did refuse, for his heart was in his work. . . . Throughout the length and breadth of the country, wherever Britons are serving, there are deep feelings of grief at the sudden loss of an officer so loved and respected.’

Lord Hawarden, who had been Governor at Wau when Vere first went there, wrote: ‘His outstanding ability was so apparent that I had no hesitation in sending him to the most difficult of the three places then vacant—namely, Rumbek. . . . We all had the greatest admiration and affection for “Fergie,” as he was always called.’

The next Governor of Bahr-el-Ghazal, Major Wheatley, under whom Vere served to the end as District Commissioner, spoke of him as ‘one of the bravest, kindest and most unselfish men that lived,’ and of his loss as ‘irreparable. . . . Officials, Merchants and Chiefs have overwhelmed me with expressions of sympathy and regret at their own personal loss.’

The Governor of Wadi Halfa said: ‘I have been

twenty years in the Sudan, and amongst all my friends there was no abler administrator or more courageous man. . . . the one man out here who is irreplaceable. . . . The Nuers respected him so much that, of their own initiative, they formed forces to protect Government property in various parts of Fergie's District. This is an absolutely unprecedented act, and shows the wonderful influence he had. . . . Your son's name will never be forgotten in this country.'

Capt. Kingdon, who was greatly impressed by the way in which the news of Vere's death was received among the Dinkas, recorded that it was the first time he had 'ever seen a Dinka show any emotion.'

Knowing nothing of Vere's finding his credo and sending it home from India, Capt. Routh wrote: 'In my opinion he approximated more nearly to Kipling's ideal in "If" than any man I know. . . . The Sudan Government will have difficulty in finding a successor to him.'

Mr. W. Ross said: 'He was a great statesman in the true sense of the word, and he possessed the wonderful capacity of looking ahead, and forming a present policy which, if persevered with, was designed to benefit the people not only at the present time, but also for many years to come. He set each of us a wonderful example.'

Capt. Crouch, who saw so much of his work, wrote of the tremendously strong feeling among the natives: 'Teng of Adok is a broken man. For days he and his followers have gone without food,

and his people are, he says, "as though dead." It was pathetic to watch and listen to these savages, like faithful dogs whose master had been taken from them. . . . He cannot be replaced.'

Major Bostock, who knew him well, said: 'The only consolation one can feel is that, in whatever there is to come after, he must have a place among the highest.'

Capt. Kidd wrote: 'Porter and I have been appointed Political Officers of the Punitive Expedition. . . . The Chiefs of the neighbouring clans—Teng of Adok and Jeych Poich at Thar Jath—are as firm as rocks. They and their minor Chiefs are in genuine grief, and are only waiting for the word from me to join in with the troops. . . . They all say that Awaraquay is the best friend they have ever had, and the only man who ever took any interest in them.'

Mr. Porter wrote: 'Since Fergie's death we have all had a great vindication of his work. Teng and all the Adok natives, as well as those at Thar Jath, are only too eager to join in with the Government forces to avenge the killing of "the father and benefactor of all the Nuers." It has been obvious to both Kidd and myself how much Fergie's work has been appreciated by the Nuers and how they learnt to love him. . . . To us all here—to the whole of the Sudan—Fergie's death means a terrible and tremendous loss. One consolation is that he will be able to watch us striving to carry on, in our own small way, the great policy he had worked out for the benefit of these natives. . . . Being new to this country

when I first met him, his friendship meant a tremendous lot to me.'

Capt. Richards wrote: 'I have stopped at all the causeways made out of the swamps by Vere, and everywhere I have been struck by the most obviously sincere grief on the part of the Northern Nuers. *They* had absolutely nothing to do with the cruel deed; and Chiefs, who had not yet received the news, absolutely shook and trembled when I told them of it. They protested that he was the one man who had pulled them out of the mire, their "father and mother combined," and that he had not met his end by "real Nuers" but by a pack of hyaenas, as they call the one particular Southern section responsible. At Yoynyang, the Missioners were grief-stricken, and to-day they told me that little boys there had cried, and others, who had been playing truant, all returned when they heard what had happened. Chief Twil Ran, the head of the local Nuers, went without food for two days; and to all these loyal Nuers, who form about 90 per cent. of the inhabitants, their world seems to have fallen in, as it were. They realize that Vere's one thought was for them all the time. More magnificent work in Africa has never been done—at any rate I have never seen or heard of it; and I am in a position to judge. I feel that in having worked with him I was the most privileged person in the Sudan.'

Mrs. Richards—the 'Bunt' of his letters—said: 'The gloom that this tragedy has spread all over the country is only one of the things which show how loved Fergie was. . . . No one could ever have done

for the Nuers what he has done for them. . . . We all adored Fergie.'

Mrs. Gillan, speaking of the weeks she spent on board the *Kerreri* when her husband was ill, called him 'the dearest and most thoughtful host—more like a woman, with his eye to detail and all the little things that count so much. He leaves a splendid memory of his wonderful work and achievement in the Bog.'

Mrs. Wheatley said: 'Out here they speak of his work as a miracle.'

One might go on quoting indefinitely.

'His place can never be filled. He will be missed more than any man in the Sudan.'

'He was the ideal District Commissioner.'

'He was reformer, apostle and administrator in one. . . . full of hope, inspiration and sincerity. I know of no one for whom I have a greater respect.'

'He did a job of work that no other man could have done.'

'What a fine, unstained record he has left!'

'One heard nothing but praise of him.'

'His was such an outstanding personality.'

'One of the finest examples of those Englishmen who give their lives to the betterment of the Native Races.'

'With savage tribes he was another Gordon.'

'He met with amazing success. This makes the tragedy all the more grievous.'

'He achieved success in the face of exceptional difficulties.'

'The Army and the Sudan have lost a fine and efficient Officer-Administrator.'

'Everyone who knew Fergie admired and loved him.'

'One of the most charming men I have ever met. . . . unassuming, sympathetic—a regular man's man. No one could help loving him.'

'There is no memory I have of him which is not perfect.'

'I know what a truly good, straight, clean life he lived.'

'The little band of loyal and true comrades, out there, are mourning the irreparable loss of their beloved Fergie.'

'He was absolutely without fear.'

'I had the honour of saying my word about Vere in a London church last night.'

'At every age he was everything that was straight and manly and lovable in character. He was not the good young man who is also a muff.'

'The world is the poorer for his absence.'

'One of the very best.'

'The keynote of his life was service.'

'The world at large appreciates your son's labours and sacrifice.'

'Beloved by everyone who knew him.'

'He was the most good man I have ever known.'

'A loss to the Empire.'

'A man to be proud of.'

'Truly his name will live for evermore.'

'He was the most amazing British Ambassador

amongst his Nuers; but I never trusted them a yard—and told him so.’

‘He will never be forgotten.’

‘A wonderful man.’

‘He was always doing some kind thing.’

‘A perfect son.’

‘His was a beautiful life.’

‘One of the bravest and dearest of men.’ . .

What more is there to say? Let this be the last:

‘I thank God for his beautiful life of unselfishness, his heart of gold and his unquenchable belief in everything good.’

THE END

Map of
SOUTHERN SUDAN
to illustrate
"FERGIE BEY"

Scale of Miles
0 50 100 200

